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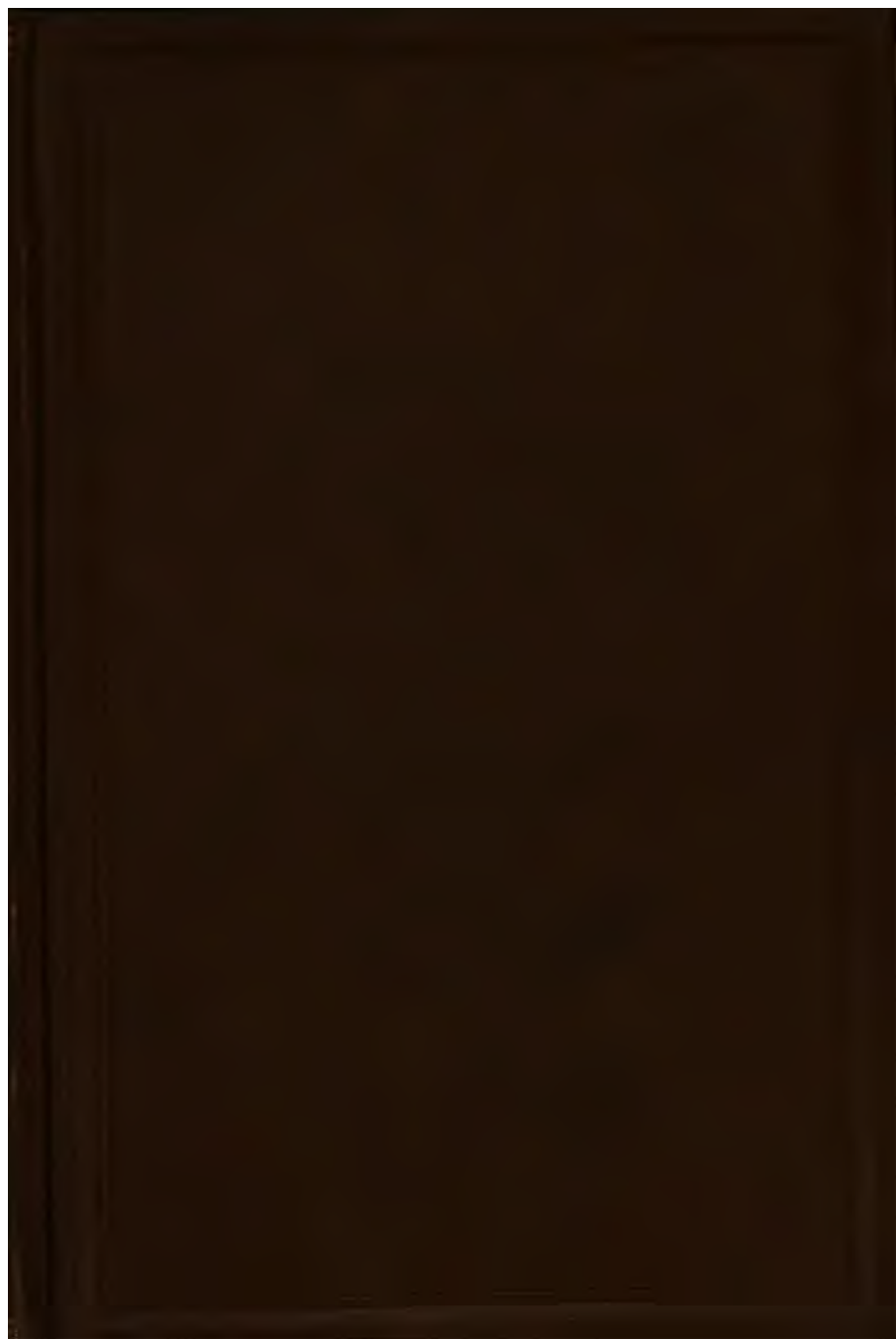
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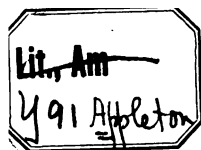
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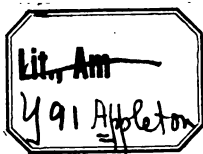
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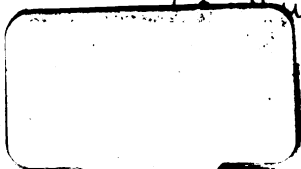


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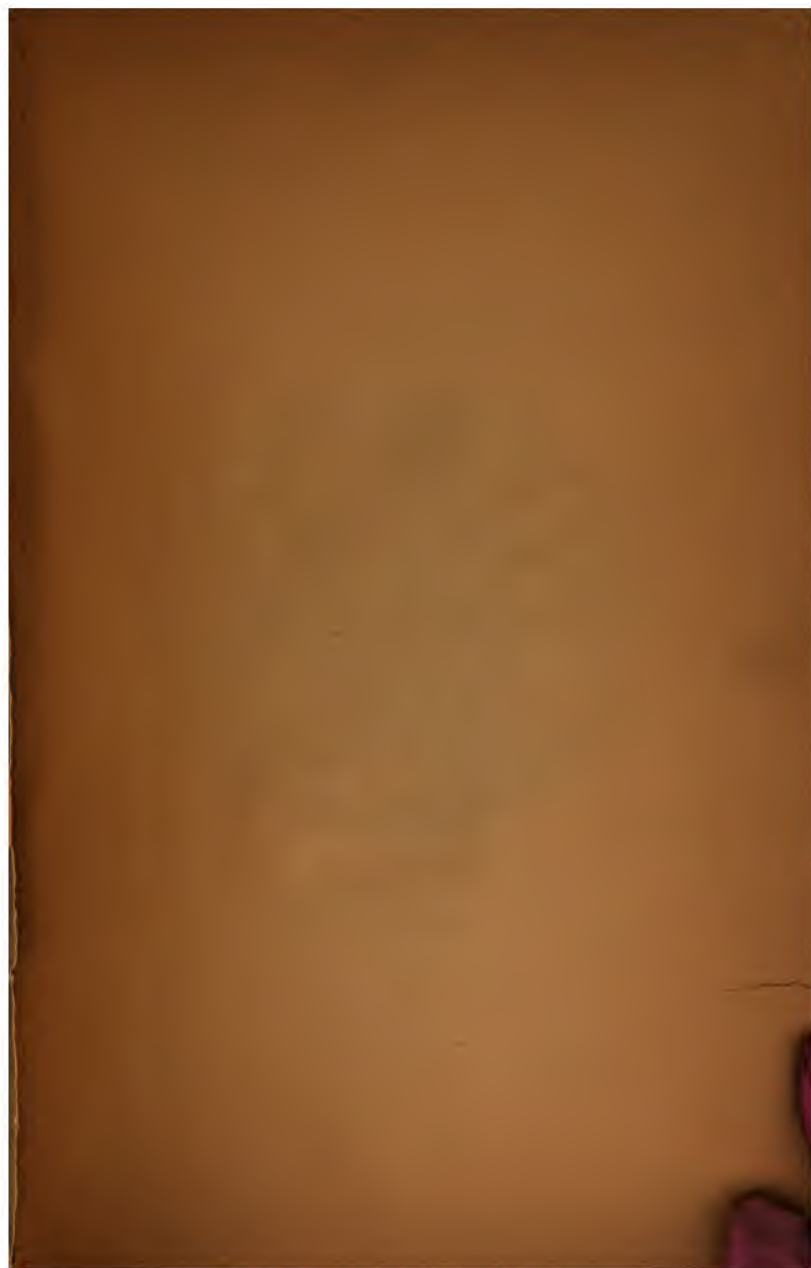
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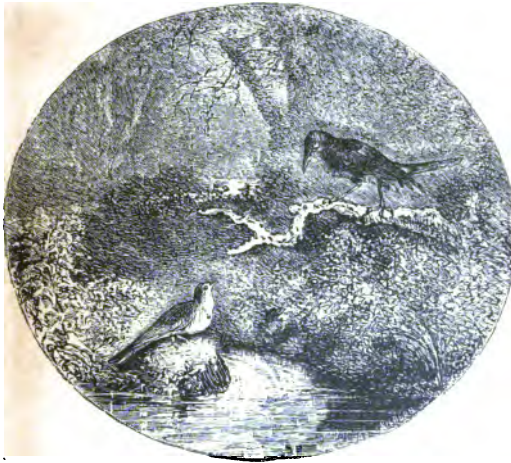


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STORIES FOR EVA.

"All thy Works shall Praise thee, O Lord!"



PRIZE SERIES.

BOSTON :
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION.
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O

STORIES FOR EVA.

BY

ANNA E. APPLETON.



BOSTON:
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION.
1884.

JUN 25 1890

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AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,
28, Chauncy Street.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
ELLEN AND MAYAL	9
THE CHERRY-WOOD RULER	82
LITTLE IDA'S WISH	98
FLORA'S DREAM	104
COUSIN LIZZIE'S STORY	115
ROSE PRESTON'S EXPERIENCE	133

STORIES FOR EVA.

ELLEN AND MABEL.

CHAPTER I.



FIVE or six little girls were standing together on the steps of a school-house in a pleasant country village, just after the school had been dismissed. "To-morrow is Saturday," said one of them; "let us have a long walk in the woods in the afternoon."

"And let us take our suppers, and make a little picnic of it," added another. "Who will go? you, Lulu Fay?"

"I suppose so, if it is pleasant," answered the child addressed: a short, plump, rosy-cheeked little thing; "but I must go home now."

"Oh, but, Louisa, wait a minute; see how many will go, and settle where to meet."

"We can meet here," said Louisa Fay, "and as many go as can; but I really can't stop. Good-night."

Miss Curtis, the teacher, who had not yet gone, heard through the open door all that was said, and made her own comments. "What a decided little creature that is," she thought, as Louisa left them. "If she has made up her mind that a thing is to be done, they will try in vain to move her from it." Meantime, the conversation went on.

"I dare say I can go well enough," said Mabel Archer, a delicate-looking child of nine years old, with large, soft, brown eyes; "unless mamma should happen to have some other plan, and I don't think she will have, I shall have nothing particular to do at home."

"Two, then," said the first speaker, a girl of eleven, "and I make three; you, Alice Bryant?"

"Well, I guess so," answered Alice, indifferently.

"Four; Fanny Lee?"

"If I can; but I can't be sure till to-mor-

row; I may have too much to do. Only think, Lulu went off before we set the time."

"Never mind," answered Mabel, "I can let her know. You'll go, Nelly dear?"

"I want to go," replied Ellen Murray; "but I dare say mother may need me for something."

"Your mother never lets you go anywhere," said Alice Bryant. "I never knew a little girl like you work so hard. It is too bad; my mother says so."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Fanny Lee. "Nelly has no more to do at home than I, and most of the other girls; not so much as Lulu Fay."

"Well," said Emma Fowler, who had first proposed the walk, "Alice and I don't work, anyhow; nor Mabel, either."

"But I wish I could," answered Mabel, earnestly. "I want to help, but mamma says there is nothing but what the servants can do. I can do some sewing, and she lets me help her in the garden sometimes; but I should like real work, like what Nelly and Fanny and Louisa do."

"Maybe you wouldn't like it if you had to do it," suggested Emma Fowler. "Kate, we didn't count you, but of course you'll go." Kate Flint had proposed taking their suppers; she only laughed, and said, "Of course."

But Fanny Lee took up the first part of Emma's speech. "I dare say Mabel *would* like to work, if it happened to be her duty," she said. "I like it, and I wish I could help more than I do. I am always glad when vacation comes, because then I can do things that I cannot at other times. But let us be walking along; meet at two o'clock, I suppose. I wish, Nelly and Mabel, you would go home with me."

"I should have to ask mother first," said Ellen; at which Kate and Emma laughed, and Alice said, "What for?" but Mabel quietly observed, "Mamma never lets *me* go anywhere without asking leave;" and, as Mabel's parents were very rich people, the girls did not really like to make any rude remarks upon them. So they separated: Kate leaving the others at the schoolhouse door, and at the first

cross-road Mabel and Fanny turning to the right, and Emma Fowler to the left, while Alice and Ellen kept the direct road.

“People say, truly, that a school is a little world;” said Miss Curtis, as she locked her desk and prepared to go home. “Here is Fanny, always active and cheerful, finding her happiness in her duty; Mabel, gentle and loving, longing to be useful, and helping every one she can; Kate and Emma, caring for nothing but their own pleasure, and neglecting the duties God has given them to do; Alice, idle and discontented, indulged, because she is the youngest, and allowed to please herself until nothing pleases her long; and my little Ellen, truthful and conscientious, but too easily influenced by others. I am afraid those idle girls will make her discontented and unhappy; I will go and see Mrs. Murray this very evening, and talk with her.”

“Won’t you come out and play with me after supper?” asked Alice, as she and Ellen were walking along.

“I don’t think I can to-night, Alice; but I hope I can go to the woods to-morrow.”

"It will be real mean if you can't," said Alice ; "my mother says she hates to see people make servants of their children, and try to get all the work out of them they can."

Ellen wanted to say, "I don't think my mother does so;" but she was rather timid, and Alice was older and taller, and lived in a large house, and dressed expensively, and did just as she pleased all the time; and, though Ellen did not really believe that she was treated unkindly, she was beginning to be a little influenced by what Alice and her mother said. Do children ever think how much harm they may do, by saying or repeating such unkind things? Do they know how very rude and impolite they are, when they speak in such a way as Alice did of the parents or friends of their schoolmates? And how can grown people allow themselves to make such improper comments on their neighbors in the presence of children?

Ellen Murray made no answer to Alice's remark; and just then a handsome carriage drove slowly by, and a lady, bending forward,

said, "Good-afternoon, Nelly; I hope your mother is well." Ellen answered respectfully, and the lady said to her companion, as they went on, "That is Mabel's favorite school-mate; a nice-looking child, is she not?"

"The taller girl was far prettier," answered the other lady. "I thought *her* really handsome."

"Did you?" was the careless reply; and then the subject was dropped.

"Was that Mrs. Archer?" asked Alice, when the carriage had passed.

"Yes; don't you know her?"

"No; she does not often come to our house, and then I am at school or somewhere; and Mabel never asks me to go there, and I don't like to go without being asked, because" — Alice hesitated.

"Because what?" asked Ellen, with some surprise. "You go to see the other girls whenever you like."

"Yes; but the Archers are different. I went once, and Mabel was busy and could not play with me; and Mrs. Archer, — well,

I thought she didn't want me there, and I haven't been again."

Ellen laughed. "I guess it was a mistake, Alice. I don't go *very* often, because mother can't spare me; but Mrs. Archer and May are always very kind, and they come to our house. But, good-by; I hope it will be pleasant to-morrow."

Agnes Murray, Ellen's little sister, stood on the steps. "O Ellen! I've been waiting for you ever so long," she exclaimed. "Mother wants you." Ellen went in, looking, I am afraid, a little vexed.

"Was school dismissed later than usual?" asked Mrs. Murray, pleasantly.

"Only a little; but the girls were planning a walk in the woods and a picnic supper for to-morrow afternoon. I suppose I can't go," she added, despondingly.

"Why do you suppose so, my dear?" inquired her mother.

"Why, I thought you would want me at home," answered Ellen, feeling a little ashamed as she said it.

“Well, we will not talk about it now; your father wished you and Agnes to come to him after school, but he said you were to do just as you liked about it.”

Ellen hesitated; but Agnes, who was whiling away the time of waiting by playing ball with little three-years old Edmund, called out, “Yes, come, Ellen; I’ve waited all this time for you,” and they set off. When they arrived, a wagon was standing at the door, and Mr. Murray himself was talking with a gentleman, who left him just as the little girls came up. “What! both my daughters?” he said. “Agnes I expected; but I had my doubts about Nelly. However, jump into the wagon, if you would like a ride with me.” They were quickly in, with a little assistance, and, when Mr. Murray had taken the reins, and was driving off, Ellen asked, “What made you think I shouldn’t come, father?”

“Oh, I had my reasons; I will tell you after we get home and have had our supper.”

While the children were having their ride, Mrs. Murray received two calls: one from Miss

Curtis, who had seen the little girls go down the road, and thought this a convenient time for her intended conversation. And after Miss Curtis had left, there was a gentle tap at the open door, and a soft voice said, "May I come in?"

"Is it you, Mabel? Yes, come in; but Ellen has gone out."

"I don't mind that, Mrs. Murray. I wanted to see you. Perhaps Nelly has told you the girls were planning a walk and a supper in the woods to-morrow. She seemed to think she could not go, and mamma said I might come and ask you to be so good as to let her go, if you did not particularly need her. I should not enjoy it half so much without Nelly," added Mabel, raising her soft brown eyes wistfully to Mrs. Murray's face.

"I know of nothing to prevent Ellen from going," answered Mrs. Murray. "I always wish her to share the enjoyments of her companions when it is proper and reasonable; but you know, Mabel, we are not rich, like your father and Mr. Bryant, and some of our other

neighbors ; and it sometimes happens that we cannot afford to let Ellen do things or have things that she would like. She must learn to be content with the situation in which God has seen fit to place her."

"Yes, I know," said Mabel. "But I am glad she can go this time, because some of the girls say things that — that I shouldn't like to have them say about my mother. They don't mean any harm, Mrs. Murray," added the gentle little girl, hastily, unwilling to blame any one ; "but I think it makes Nelly uncomfortable."

"She shall go, Mabel dear, and thank you for coming. I would not hold Edmund any longer ; he is too heavy for you."

"Oh, I like to take him sometimes, because he puts me in mind of my little brother that died. But mamma told me not to stay ; so good-by, little Edmund ; good-by, Mrs. Murray." And the loving-hearted child tripped away, happy in the prospect of her friend's company.

When Mr. Murray came home with his little

girls, they found their supper awaiting them; and Edmund had already finished his bread and milk, and gone to bed. Ellen did not wait to be asked, but herself proposed to clear the table and wash the dishes, that her mother might be at liberty. Agnes was ever ready to help, and Mrs. Murray went back to her sewing, and talked with her husband.

“And now, little daughter,” said Mr. Murray, when Agnes, feeling very sleepy, had said good-night and left them, “come here, and I will tell you why I did not much expect to see you this afternoon. Can you guess why?” Ellen shook her head, in mute answer. “I have seen, or thought I saw, that my Ellen has not been so willing to do what we have asked her, for some weeks past; that she was inclined to be a little fretful about it, and think it hard that she could not play all the time; and I fancied I had heard her say, ‘I don’t see why I need to do it,’ and other things of the kind. Was I right?”

“I suppose so,” answered Ellen, in a very low tone.

"And I have been wondering what caused the change, and why my happy little girl should have seemed unwilling to assist her father and mother. I don't think it can be that you love us less, and I should not like to think you were growing idle. What is it, Nelly?"

Ellen was a truthful child; she said, with some reluctance, "I don't know, only Alice Bryant says nobody else has to work as I do, and that mother makes a servant of me, and never lets me go anywhere, or have any thing like other girls. And I know Alice never works at all."

"So, that is it," said Mr. Murray, lifting Ellen on his knee. "Now, if anybody, man, woman, or child, had said such things to me about my mother, when I was a boy, I should have been exceedingly offended, and should have wanted to have very little to do with that person afterward. But who is Alice Bryant? Not a very wise woman, I guess."

Ellen laughed. "Not a woman at all, father; she is a girl in my class, and she is twelve years old."

"And you were ten last month; and is Miss Alice a very good girl, and a fine scholar?"

"Oh, no, father; she plays and talks very often at school, and seldom has perfect lessons. Why, you know Mr. Bryant, who lives a little way down the street; he's Alice's father."

"Not very wise or very good; and, certainly, not very amiable: for, don't you see, Nelly dear, that Alice must either think you a very bad, ungrateful child, who liked to hear insulting things said of her kind mother, or else she does not care at all for your feelings, and is willing to make you unhappy. I think, if I were you, I would not care for what was said by such a girl."

Ellen looked somewhat puzzled. "I don't think Alice really meant to be unkind; besides, she says her mother says so."

"And do you suppose her mother does say so?"

"I think she does; because one day, when I was playing with Alice, Mrs. Bryant asked me what I had to do at home; and when I

told her, she laughed, and said some people didn't care for their children, except to get as much work out of them as possible; but she liked to see children happy, and meant Alice should enjoy herself. She did not say it to me, but to another lady."

"And have you been any happier, my child, since you listened to such talk as this?"

"No, father; but I can't help their saying it, you know."

"You can help hearing it, my daughter. I would rather you would not go to Alice Bryant's, or ask her to come here any more at present. Be kind to her at school, and treat her politely when you happen to be with her, but do not be intimate with her; and if she should make any more such remarks, say to her that you do not wish to hear them, and cannot walk or talk with her if she speaks so. Can it be that you have believed such things of this dear mother, who is always doing something to make us happy?"

Poor Ellen had been feeling more and more ashamed all the time her father had been talk-

ing with her; and now she wiped away the tears that were running down her cheeks, before she answered. "No; I didn't really believe it, but she and Emma Fowler kept saying so whenever mother wouldn't let me go with them."

"So it was because they could not always have their own way, was it? Well, I think mother is a better judge of what is proper for you than any of your schoolmates or their parents can be; especially as they cannot know any thing about the circumstances. But is it true, Ellen, that you work more than any one else? Think. I dare say you do not know much about it, but you hear the girls talk of their home duties. Do not some of them have quite as much to do as you? How is it with that little Fay girl?"

"Lulu? Oh, she does a great deal more than I do, I know, because there are so many little ones, and her mother is very often sick, and she is the eldest daughter. And Fanny Lee: she cooks and sweeps, and helps wash and iron; but then she is older than Alice Bry-

ant. I suppose Mabel doesn't work any, but she says she wishes she could."

"And which are the happiest children and the pleasantest companions: the idlers or the workers?"

"I don't know; the workers, I think, except Mabel: she is always good and pleasant. But I think she does work when she can; she is always trying to help somebody. I love her best of all."

"Well, Nelly, it seems that Miss Alice's remarks were neither wise nor kind nor true; that you do not work harder than others, and that it does not make children happier to be idle. But I think we have talked enough for once, and I will put off what else I had to say till another time."

"Yes; Ellen must go to bed now," said Mrs. Murray, "for she means to go to the woods to-morrow with Mabel and some others, and she will want to bake some little cakes and biscuits for her supper. Good-night, darling."

As Ellen kissed her mother, she whispered,

"I am sorry I listened to Alice ; I will not any more," and went to bed thinking how kind and good her parents were, and how very foolish she had been to be influenced at all by the remarks of Alice and Emma.

"I wish people could let each other alone," said Mr. Murray ; " what business has Alice Bryant or Alice Bryant's mother with our home affairs, I should like to know ? I am afraid that Alice is a very bad girl."

"Not very bad, I think," replied Mrs. Murray, with a smile. "She is an idle, heedless child ; and, I dare say, really thinks it hard upon Ellen that she is not allowed to play all the time, and her remarks were intended as sympathy. As Ellen said herself, Alice did not mean to be unkind, and I do not imagine she has ever learned respect for parental authority."

"But what can the child's mother be, not to teach her better, and to talk herself as Nelly said she did ?"

"Not a very wise or well educated woman, I suspect ; but I do not think Ellen will be

permanently injured by the influence. Her favorite companions are of entirely different character; and Alice herself is too fickle to care for Ellen's company long."



CHAPTER II.

SATURDAY rose bright and clear, and not too warm; just what a day in June should be; and at two o'clock, six little girls met at the schoolhouse door, with baskets or pails. Kate Flint did not appear; she had received an invitation to visit some friends, and preferred to accept that, rather than keep her appointment with her schoolmates. They were sorry not to have her company, for Kate was full of frolic and made very droll speeches; but no one said any thing in blame, except Emma Fowler, whose comment was, "Just like Kate Flint; she never minds breaking a promise." They had a very pleasant walk,

and after they had rambled about as long as they wished, they sat down in a quiet, shady place, to rest and talk and play games: some of the little company having come provided with the means.

"O girls!" suddenly exclaimed Louisa Fay, who always put her whole heart into every thing she did, — work, study, or play, — "I saw lots of strawberry blossoms a few weeks ago, not far from here, and I guess the berries must be ripe by this time. Let us go and get some to eat with our supper." The others willingly consented.

"Only some one ought to stay with the baskets and things," said Emma.

"Two, you mean," added the more considerate Fanny; "it would be too dull for one to stay alone. Now, who will stay? Lulu can't, because she is to show us where the berries are. I am willing to do either way."

"I will stay if Mabel will," said Ellen; and all agreeing, Fanny took her provisions from the pail and laid them on the flat top of Mabel's basket. Each had brought a cup or

mug, and, with these and Fanny's pail, the four started: Mabel and Ellen promising to have the supper-table ready by the time they returned. The little friends lay down on the grass, and looked up through the branches of the tall pines at the blue sky, and chatted of various matters, grave and gay, until they supposed it time to make their preparations. The table was a long, narrow, flat rock, the napkins made the cloth, and the plates and dishes were supplied mostly by imagination; but the various articles made a very pretty show when neatly arranged, and Mabel's china mug of white and gold, filled with wild flowers and set in the centre, gave a very pleasing effect; while some branches of pine, fastened in the clefts of the rock, shaded the whole from the stray sunbeams. They had sat down at a little distance to contemplate their work, when Ellen started up with a cry of pleasure, to run and meet Miss Curtis, whom she saw approaching. Mabel was equally delighted; and when they had led their teacher to a soft, mossy seat, they placed themselves one on each side, ready to talk or listen.

"It is very quiet and lovely here," said Miss Curtis; "what a cool, shady spot you have found; and how prettily the sunlight flickers on the grass and flowers, and lights them up. I never walk in the woods without remembering the poet's words, 'The groves were God's first temples.' You have been gathering flowers, too, I see; I should like to pick some by and by to take home with me."

"Oh, we can show you where to find plenty of them," said Mabel. "But, Miss Curtis, do you suppose heaven will be more beautiful than this earth? I don't mean all of the earth, you know, but such a place as this, and what I see from my window at home. Nelly and I were talking about it, and it does not seem as if we could want any prettier sights."

"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for those who love him," answered Miss Curtis. "My dear Mabel, I am glad your heart can recognize and enjoy the loveliness of our earth; but it is all as nothing compared with the sights which will

meet our spiritual eyes when we enter the other world. And I do not suppose we have ever seen a thousandth part of the beauty which lies around us. I have a magnifying glass with me ; gather some bits of moss, Ellen : the soft green moss on that rock yonder, and some of the red cup moss, if you can find any."

"Oh, I saw some of that when I brought the water," said Mabel ; and in a few minutes several varieties had been gathered and brought.

"Now we will just go into the sunlight, where we can see better," said Miss Curtis ; and then she laid the bit of soft green moss under the glass, and bade the children look in turn.

"Oh, how beautiful ! how perfect !" they cried. "Why, the centre is like a little flower with all its leaves, only as green as the rest. I did not know moss was so very pretty." "And the red moss ! why, it looks like a piece of coral ; and you can look away into the cup, and see how pretty the sides are." Enchanted with

the new sights, one specimen after another was brought and examined, to the ever-increasing wonder of the little girls; and at last Mabel said, with a half sigh, "But doesn't it seem a pity such beautiful things should be here, and no one to see them?"

"Such beautiful things are all around us, dear children," answered Miss Curtis; "the earth is full of the glory of the Lord; it is only that our eyes do not see it."

"But it seems strange, too," said Ellen, pursuing the train of thought Mabel had started, "that God should have put so many beautiful things where no one ever will see them; it seems almost as if He must take pleasure in just making them; for I suppose there are just as many where no one ever goes."

"Undoubtedly there are; and I sometimes think it is a lesson to us, an example, that, seeing how perfectly even the least thing is fashioned that God has made, we should try to perform our least duties as faithfully. And when I remember the words of the Psalmist,

‘The heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord’s; but the earth hath he given unto the children of men;’ and when I see how much our Father has done to make this earth which He has given us a happy and pleasant dwelling-place, it saddens me to think that so few of His children recognize His love and goodness, and love Him in return.”

There was a pause, for Miss Curtis had spoken very earnestly, and the hearts of her young hearers were touched. After a few moments, Mabel said, hesitatingly, and slipping her little hand fondly into her teacher’s, “Miss Curtis, I think—I am sure—that I love our Father in heaven, but I cannot do any thing for Him. I wish I could.”

“You feel, perhaps, as David did, when he said, ‘Thou art my Lord; my goodness extendeth not to thee.’”

“And we cannot give Him any thing,” added Ellen, “because every thing is His already. Isn’t there a Psalm which tells about the cattle on the hills being the Lord’s?”

“Yes, the fiftieth; this is the part you

mean : ‘Hear, O my people, and I will speak ; I am God, even thy God. I will take no bullock out of thy house, no he-goats out of thy folds : for every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains ; and the wild beasts of the fields are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee : for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof.’”

“I love to read the Psalms,” said Mabel ; “some of them, I mean, that I can understand. And I have learned a few of them.”

“The more you can learn of the most beautiful passages in the Bible, the better,” said Miss Curtis. “I used to think it hard sometimes that my grandmother, who brought me up, would make me learn a part of a chapter or a hymn, or both, every Sunday ; but I have been very thankful to her since. Children would not complain of what they have to do and learn, if they could only know how much happier these very things would make them at some future time. But, Mabel, you said, I think, that you could not do any thing for our

heavenly Father. I heard a good minister say, not long since, that the best way to show our gratitude to God for His constant kindness to us, was to help our fellow-creatures ; to make those around us as happy as we could ; and, in that very Psalm we were speaking about, it says, ‘ Whoso offereth praise glori-fieth me.’ So it would seem that if we thank God truly for His continual goodness, and try to be useful in this beautiful world, we shall please Him. When you, Nelly, help your mother cheerfully and lovingly, and take pleasure in seeing how much you can do for her, when you are kind and gentle with Agnes and Edmund, you are really making an offering to God with which He is well pleased.”

“ Miss Curtis,” said Mabel, who had listened earnestly, “ I should like to tell you something, and I don’t think it can be wrong, though mamma says it is not proper, usually, to repeat what we hear. Some one came to our house the other day to beg ; it was an old man, and mamma told the cook to give him all he wanted to eat, and when he went away she gave him

some clothes and a car-ticket: he said he was going to the city. When he was gone, a lady who is visiting us said, 'Why did you give him any thing? he might have been an impostor.' And mamma said, 'He might have been, but I could not know it, and I would rather believe people honest. And, besides, I dare not refuse charity to those who ask, when I remember the warning, Inasmuch,' — and then she stopped. I wanted to ask her what she meant, but I did not have a chance."

"The words to which she referred are in one of our Saviour's parables, May. He is telling how the righteous shall be rewarded and the selfish and neglectful punished. These last say, 'Lord, when saw we thee ahungered, or athirst, or sick, or in prison, and ministered not unto thee?' And the answer is, 'Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not unto me.' And the lesson your mother drew from it, Mabel dear, and which we all should learn, is, that when we do a kindness to any one, Jesus feels as tenderly to us as if we did it to

Himself; and when we refuse to help those who are in need of our services, He feels our unkindness as if it were done to Himself."

"And how can I do things for God?" asked Mabel. "I cannot give away money and clothes like mamma, and I have no little brother or sister as Nelly has, and mamma does not often need my help. What *can* I do?"

"You can be considerate and thoughtful in your treatment of the servants, and you can be kind and obliging, as I think you always try to be, to your schoolmates; and I doubt not our Father will find many things for your little hands and heart to do, if they are willing and ready. But where are your companions? I thought some of the other girls were with you."

"They went to pick strawberries," answered Ellen, "and left us to take care of the baskets and set the table. But I see them coming; here they are. Did you find any berries, Lulu?"

"Oh, didn't we?" said Fanny Lee, displaying her pail heaped with the bright, red fruit.

"But how nice you have made the supper look! O Miss Curtis! I am glad you are here to share our supper with us. Hand me that other pail, Nelly, and I'll get some water."

"Let me go," interposed Mabel, "for I have been doing nothing, and you must be tired;" and off she ran to the spring, while the others sat down on the grass and threw aside their hats or bonnets.

"And so these children have had you all to themselves, Miss Curtis," said Fanny, good-humoredly. "I don't think that was quite fair."

"Only it couldn't be helped, you know," remarked Ellen. "And, O Fanny! O Lulu! she has been showing us the prettiest things. Won't you let them see, too?" she added, turning to her teacher.

"Certainly, but I think they would like their supper first, and here is Mabel with her pail of water." Then came exclamations. "Oh, sit by me, Miss Curtis!" "No, by me!" "Why don't you put in your claim, Nelly and

May?" "Ah, we have had her already, you know; it is your turn now." So Fanny and Louisa were placed each side of Miss Curtis, Alice and Emma opposite, and Mabel and Ellen at the ends; and a very merry supper they had. There was enough and to spare, and when all had finished, Ellen said, "What shall we do with the rest?" "Leave it here for the birds and squirrels," answered Alice. "I guess they would like it." "Gather up the fragments, that nothing be lost," said Miss Curtis. "Do none of you wish to take these things home?" "No, oh no," was the ready answer. "Then suppose we go around by Mrs. Kelly's house,—she is a widow, you know, with a number of little ones,—and give the remnants to them. They don't have cakes and tarts often, and it will be a treat." This was agreed upon, and all the pieces laid neatly in one basket.

Then more flowers and seeds and mosses were gathered, and their beauties examined through the magnifier. Louisa and Fanny were as pleased as Mabel and Ellen had been;

Alice and Emma looked, but did not care so much. The comments were what might have been expected. Alice said only, "How funny! I didn't know things looked like that!" Emma could not see any use or pleasure in looking at bits of moss and seeds. Louisa asked all the questions she could, saying she did love dearly to know about things, and she could tell Charley and the others; and Fanny said it was very wonderful that so much care had been taken with every little thing, "because it does not seem to be really worth while, you know," she added.

"Our Father' doeth all things well, Fanny dear," said Miss Curtis. "Not only every thing that He does is right and proper in itself, but all these tokens of His love and power are perfectly fashioned, and yet so great is the variety that no two are precisely alike."

"Let us go home," whispered Emma to Alice; "I don't want to hear all this prosy talk, and I don't want to go round by Mrs. Kelly's house, either. Let us come away now."

"Well," answered Alice, a little reluctantly; she did not care for the conversation, but she liked to be with the others. "Only we ought to let them know."

"That's easy enough. Fanny, Lulu! Alice and I are going home now; we can't stay any longer."

"Good-by, then," said Fanny; and "Good-by," repeated the others. Alice cast some half-regretful glances back as she left the little group, but she generally did as Emma wished, because she was really too indifferent to care much. Poor child; she had been so indulged and ill-trained that nothing had power to please her long, and the only prospect before her was of growing up into an indolent, ignorant, selfish, useless woman; and yet she had naturally a pleasant disposition and more than common capacity and energy: all wasted, because she had been allowed to be always idle. The other children gathered flowers for their teacher and themselves; and made ready to go home also, but by another road. When they reached Mrs. Kelly's house, Miss Curtis

knocked, and a pleasant-looking woman came to the door, while several little faces peeped from the windows.

"These are some of my pupils, Mrs. Kelly, who have been having a picnic supper in the woods, and they would like, if you are willing, to give what they have left to your children." Mrs. Kelly took the basket, saying the children would be pleased enough, and asked the party to walk in, but they preferred waiting outside until the basket was brought back. "Now you can remember," said Miss Curtis, as they walked on, "that this afternoon's ramble has not only given pleasure to yourselves, but to others. It is a very noticeable thing, that sharing our pleasures with others always increases them."

"Doubling a thing by cutting it in two, like the fairy broomstick Lulu read about last week," said Fanny.

"Or like the story Nelly read to us," added Mabel, "of the half being better than the whole,—the little Arab boys and the date-tree."

"It is not like it, but it puts me in mind of what my father read in the paper," Louisa said. "How a man asked his friend to accompany him somewhere, and when the friend objected that four miles was too far, the man said it would be only two miles apiece."

They all laughed at this division of distance, and then Miss Curtis said, "I am not sure that the man was far wrong, after all. Four miles, with a pleasant, cheerful companion, would seem no longer than two, if you were alone, or had a fretful, complaining person with you. But if some time any of you would like to do a really kind action, there is a little sick girl living near me, who would be glad of your company sometimes. Do any of you know Mary Allen?"

"Isn't she the little girl who has a lame back, or something of that kind?" asked Ellen.

"Yes, she has a spinal disease, and will never be any better. Her friends are as kind to her as possible, but they are busy, hard-working people, and she is left alone a good

deal. When she is able to sit up, she amuses herself making little pin-cushions, bags, and such things, but she cannot sit up very long, and it tires her eyes to read much. I think she would be very glad to have some of you come in and read to her or talk with her."

"Mamma would let me go, if you would speak to her about it, Miss Curtis," exclaimed Mabel, eagerly; "I am sure she would."

"I dare say my mother would be willing, too," remarked Fanny; "but I should not know what to say to a strange child, and a sick one too."

"I think your kind heart would soon teach you, Fanny," answered Miss Curtis, smiling. "And Mary would not seem like a stranger, long."

"But see here, Miss Curtis," Fanny went on, "unless you really wish for a longer walk, there's no need for you and May and Nelly to come round our road. I'll show you a short cut which will take you direct to the schoolhouse hill; and it is a pleasant way, too; only you'll have to cross a brook and climb a stone wall."

"I think we shall all be equal to that, Fanny," was the smiling answer; "but it will take you out of your way."

"Oh, I shall only go to the brook, and then leave you in Lulu's care; she knows the way well enough."

When they reached the brook, Louisa and Ellen ran across the stepping-stones as lightly and carelessly as if they had been a solid bridge; Mabel hesitated a little, and Fanny, noticing her timidity, took her hand and led her across. Miss Curtis followed, and then Fanny ran back, but turning round to speak, lost her footing, and slipped into the water. It was not deep, and she instantly sprang out on the other side, saying, with a merry laugh, "So much for looking one way and going another. No harm done, only a pair of wet feet, and they will soon be dry. Good-night, all."

One after another, the party separated, Mabel and Ellen last, and they reached home quite as soon as their parents expected them.

"Have you had a pleasant afternoon, little daughter?" asked Mrs. Archer, when Mabel

entered the room where the family were at tea. "And will you have some strawberries with us?"

"No, thank you, mamma: we had wild strawberries for supper; and we had a very pleasant time. Miss Curtis came, a little while before supper was ready, and that made it pleasanter."

"And here is another pleasant thing; a letter from your sister."

"From Cecilia? -O mamma! when is she coming home?"

"In less than two weeks; but take the letter,—it lies on the table yonder,—and read it yourself. When my boy and girl come home, Margaret," added Mrs. Archer, turning to her guest, "the house will not be so still as it is now. May is merry enough in her own way, but it is a very quiet way; whereas you can hear Cecilia and Cuthbert all over the house at almost any hour in the day."

Miss Gibson laughed. "*I* shall not hear them," she said. "I don't know that I regret at all that my visit will be over before they return."

"And yet, I think you would like them both," remarked Mr. Archer. "For my part, I should prefer to have them always at home; but they must have a better education than this place can afford, so we must put up with it."

And were these little girls any happier and better for their pleasant afternoon in the woods? I think they all were better for it, for their time had been innocently and happily spent, and they could hardly help learning something from what they saw. And some of them had their love of God and their desire to please Him made deeper and stronger.



CHAPTER III.

"IS it time to go to church?" inquired Miss Gibson, the next afternoon, as Mabel entered the parlor with her hat on.

"Mabel is not going to church this afternoon," replied Mrs. Archer. "She is going

to pass an hour or two with a child of about her own age, who has been for some years an invalid, and I hope it will do them both good."

"But I suppose she could take some other day than Sunday?" said Miss Gibson.

Mrs. Archer smiled. "We have the highest authority, Margaret," she answered, "for believing it is lawful to do good on any day, however sacred. I do not think my little daughter could be better employed than in making the time pass happily to this poor helpless child. Mabel, love, if you will go to the kitchen, Lucy will give you a little basket of strawberries I put up for Mary,—isn't that her name?—and you can take some flowers, too. What book have you? Oh, yes, that is a very nice one to carry. I hope you will have a pleasant story to tell me when you return."

"And may I stop at Nelly's house as I come back? I know she will like to hear about it," asked Mabel.

"Certainly, if Mrs. Murray is willing. Good-by."

"I think you allow your children to have their own way a great deal," remarked Miss Gibson. "Do you think it is good for them?"

"Why not, so long as their own way is a proper and right way? If they wished to do wrong I should certainly forbid it; but they have very seldom been disobedient to my wishes: Mabel never, I think."

"And do you suppose your way of training will make Christians of them?" continued Miss Gibson.

"I hope it will help to do so. If being a Christian means loving our Father whom we have not seen, and our brethren whom we have seen, if it means receiving into the heart the precepts of the Saviour, and trying to live by them, I think my little Mabel is a Christian now. I don't know that she ever made any special resolve about it; I think her love for her heavenly, as for her earthly, friends has grown with her growth and strengthened with her strength. She has naturally a sweet, loving disposition, and her religious feelings have only needed culture; and now, what was

at first only feeling, is becoming principle. It is different with the others; they are more impulsive and eager; they have faults to contend with and temptations to overcome that Mabel knows nothing about. But, Margaret, I have no fears for them; we do our best for them: our Father will do the rest."

"But you do not mean to say that Mabel never does wrong, I suppose?"

"No more than I mean to say that I never do wrong, or that you never do wrong. Mabel is a child, and has the faults and follies of childhood; but I believe she sincerely desires to do right, and is sorry when she fails in her duty. I don't know that we have any right to expect more." Miss Gibson resumed her book, and the conversation ended.

Meanwhile, our little friend Mabel had gone to Miss Curtis, whom she found ready to accompany her to Mrs. Allen's house. They entered without ringing,—Miss Curtis was a frequent and welcome visitor,—and proceeded directly to Mary's room. The little invalid was resting in a large, easy-chair, by a window

which looked into the street; and her mother, who seemed tired and worn, sat near her.

"Mrs. Allen, I have brought a little friend of mine to see Mary. She will be glad to read to her and wait upon her, and if you would like to go to church, one or both of us will stay till you return."

"No, I don't care to go to meeting," replied Mrs. Allen, "for I should only go to sleep, and I can do that better at home. But if the little girl could stay an hour or two, I would go and lie down, for I really am very tired to-day."

"I can stay as well as not," said Mabel, "if Mary would like it." The children had already exchanged glances and smiles, and were quite ready to make acquaintance. So Mrs. Allen went to take the rest she so much needed, Mabel took off her hat and sacque, and Miss Curtis sat down to wait till the church bells should ring.

"Oh, what lovely flowers!" were Mary's first words. "Did you bring them for me?" as Mabel laid them in her lap. "Thank you

so much! I do love flowers dearly, and these are so sweet. Roses, and pinks, and blue-bells, and oh, so many others! Miss Curtis, would you please put them in water? And strawberries, too? I think people are very kind to me."

Miss Curtis seemed to be quite at home. She went to a closet, took a blue-and-white vase, filled it with water, and, putting the flowers in it, set it on a stand by Mary's side. Then she poured the strawberries into a dish, and came back to her seat. "Thank you; and will you tell me your name?" turning to her young visitor.

"Mabel Archer; and yours is Mary Allen, Miss Curtis says."

"Yes. Isn't it your father that has the pretty carriage with the two gray horses? I see it go by here very often, and I guess I've seen you in it. Oh, the bell is ringing; now we will see the people go by to meeting. Miss Curtis, you'll come in again when you come back?"

"Yes; and Mary, if you grow tired, ask Mabel to call your mother."

"I will ; but I don't think I shall be tired, for I lay down almost all the morning." Miss Curtis went, and Mabel came to the window, and listened with some amusement to Mary's comments upon the passers. "I have to be alone a good deal," she explained, "and so it is company for me to sit here and see the people go by ; and I like to fancy where they are going, and what they are going to do, and all about them. But sometimes I can't sit up, and then I look out of the other window, where I can see the trees and the grass and the sky ; and that is all I want to see when I feel so sick and tired. But now the people are gone by ; come and sit close by me, and tell me about yourself, and what you do at home."

Mabel complied, and willingly told all she thought would interest her companion. Suddenly she checked herself. "But, Mary, do you really like to hear me tell such things ? It seems so hard to hear about it, and not be able to do it."

Mary's merry laugh reassured her. "Why, that is just the reason. If I could do it my-

self I shouldn't care to hear it, you know. I should like to see some of those little girls; couldn't you bring them with you some time? I guess I should like Nelly and Lulu best. How old are they?"

"Nelly is ten: three months older than I am; and Lulu is eleven; but she is so little, you would not think so. She is not so tall as Nelly or I."

"I am eleven, too," said Mary; "but I suppose I never shall be any taller. Oh, what is that book; did you bring it to read to me?"

"I will read it if you like. It is the 'Shadow of the Cross;' did you ever see it?"

"No," answered Mary; "but it is a pretty name for a book. Please read." She let her head sink back upon the pillows, and lay looking at the vase of flowers, while Mabel read, in a soft, sweet voice, the little allegory. Mary listened attentively, and when the story was ended, she said, "I like that very much. But I cannot run into temptations now; they will have to come to me, and I suppose they do."



MABEL READING TO MARY ALLEN.—PAGE 54.

If you only knew," she added confidentially, "how awful cross I am sometimes when my back aches badly. But I think, Mabel," and the tears came into her eyes, "that all my pleasures must have the shadow of the cross on them."

"I think so, too," replied Mabel. "I never was sick, at least since I can remember ; but I dare say if I was I should be cross and fretful. I am sure it must be very hard to be gentle and patient and pleasant all the time when one is in pain."

"I guess it is," answered Mary ; "but I used to act a great deal worse, when I was first sick. Now I try to think of all the pleasant things I can, so as to forget the pain. Miss Curtis taught me that ; and she has told me ever so many stories about people who had worse pain to bear than I, and how patient they were. And I have learned lots of hymns, and I like to repeat them ; and sometimes, when the pain is not very bad, I try to make poetry ; not real poetry, you know, like that in books, but only lines that will rhyme."

"And can you?" asked Mabel, with wondering interest.

"Oh, sometimes; but I don't let any one hear it, only Tom. He is my brother, and he writes it down for me: I can't write; and he doesn't laugh at it either. He says, 'Well done, sissy, go ahead.' And we have real good fun sometimes. Oh, don't I hear the carriages? Please, Mabel, shake up the big pillow for me, so that I can sit straighter. That is nice."

"See," said Mabel, "there is Miss Curtis, and Nelly Murray with her. Nelly is stopping at the gate. I guess she means to wait for me."

"Oh, is that Nelly Murray? Why, I have seen her ever so many times; and once when Tom was drawing me along the sidewalk in a little carriage, she stopped and spoke to me, and gave me an orange. I think she is real pretty. What blue eyes she has; and what long, curly eyelashes!"

Mabel laughed. "Did you ever see the flower people call the gentian or gentianella?"

It is blue, with fringes to the leaves. Papa says she puts him in mind of that flower; and he always calls her 'little gentian Nelly.' Here is Miss Curtis; is Nelly waiting for me?"

"Yes, dear. You can go now, and I will stay with Mary till her mother comes." But just then Mrs. Allen entered, saying she had slept all the time, and was nicely rested, and that Tom would come pretty soon to stay with Mary. So Mabel took her little basket, leaving the book for Mary to see the pictures again, and ran down to join Ellen at the gate. The two little girls were very fond of each other, and could always find enough to say, if they had been separated for a few hours only; and now, Ellen had so much to ask and Mabel to tell, that they had reached Mr. Murray's gate before they had done talking of Mary Allen.

"Come in, May, won't you, and tell mother something about it?" So Mr. and Mrs. Murray heard what Mabel could tell, and promised that Ellen should go with her soon; and then Mrs. Murray asked Mabel to stay to supper, and

Ellen and Agnes might walk home with her. Mabel paused to consider. "I think mamma would be willing," she answered, "for she said I might stop here if you wished it. So I will stay."

"And which of these little girls can tell us what the sermon was about?" inquired Mr. Murray, when they were seated on the piazza in the shade. "As Mabel and I could not go, you must preach it for us."

"I know the text," said Agnes, eagerly.

"Do you? well, that is considerable. I have known cases in which the text was the best part of the sermon. What was it, little one?"

"'I must work the works of Him that sent me while it is day; the night cometh, in which no man can work,'" repeated Agnes, with great satisfaction; for she was but seven years old, and it was a rare thing for her to remember so long a text. "Father," she went on, kneeling by him, and putting her chubby arms round his neck, "why didn't you be a minister? I think you'd make real nice sermons."

“Why didn’t I? Don’t hug quite so tight, pussy; it is too warm a day. There was a time when I thought I should spend my life in that way, but I found I was not quite strong enough, so I took to making machines instead; and perhaps the machines have done as much good as the sermons would. But this afternoon’s sermon, Nelly; what did Mr. Stanley say?”

“I’m afraid I can’t tell much,” answered Ellen, “but I liked it. He said all the people in the world have work to do that God gives them; and we must each of us try to find out what our work is and do it well; and that it is wrong for any one to neglect it and leave it for others to do, because it makes their work so much harder. And he said that sometimes people say they do not know what their work is; but if they would only open their eyes and be willing to see, they would find their work lying close by them, waiting to be done: work in their own homes, among their own friends. And he said — oh, why can’t I remember? — that we mustn’t think any thing is too little to

be a useful work, or too little for God to notice; and that when a man is faithful in his business, and a woman in her duties at home, or when a child obeys its parents cheerfully and does its little task well, all these things are doing the works of Him who sent us, and we are pleasing our Father in heaven. I haven't told it just right, you know, but that was what it meant. I thought Mr. Stanley meant his sermon as much for us children as for our fathers and mothers."

"I think you remembered a great deal, Nelly," said Mabel; "but you always remember more than I can. Didn't it make you think of what Miss Curtis said about showing our love for the Father by helping His children?"

"Yes; and Mr. Stanley said something like that, too. Father, wouldn't it make work seem easier to think we were doing it for God?"

"I think it does," answered Mr. Murray; "and I am reminded that I had something to say to you on this very subject. You told me the other day that some of the school-girls

called you a servant, because you help your mother, and you seemed to think it something to be ashamed of. I am afraid people who talk and think in that way, as a great many do, have not read carefully what the New Testament teaches us about work. They forget that our Lord Jesus worked all his life ; that the apostles were all working men, and always taught their hearers to work. They do not remember that our Father in heaven is always working, and that if He should cease His care of us for only a minute, our life and all our powers would come to an end. And the people who will not work are like the servant in the parable who hid his talent in a napkin. Perhaps he thought he was having an easy time of it, and wondered at his companions for working so hard ; but when their Lord called them to give an account, don't you think he wished he had done like the others ? And as to being a servant, we all ought to be servants of Christ, and are, whether we mean it or not, servants of each other. What is a servant ? ”

“ Some one who works for others, I suppose,” said Ellen.

“Very well; when mother gets our dinner or supper, or makes our clothes, she is our servant; if I make some machinery for Mr. Archer’s mills, I am his servant; if I go to Mr. Jordan, the lawyer, and he writes a deed or a contract for me, he is my servant; when Mr. Stanley preaches to us, or attends a funeral, or performs any of the duties which belong to his position, he is the servant of his congregation; when Mabel, here, assists her schoolmates or reads to little sick Mary, she is the servant of the one she helps; Miss Curtis is the servant of her pupils when she teaches them. So you see we all are servants, whether we mean to be or not.”

“I never thought of that,” said Mabel; “but it is pleasant to know such things.”

“Yes; and it is pleasant to remember, too, that Paul and the other apostles liked to call themselves ‘servants of Christ,’ and that Jesus Himself told His disciples ‘whosoever would be chief among you, let him be your servant;’ as if the degree of worth in the kingdom of heaven depended on the amount of service

done to others. "But here comes Agnes, to tell us supper is ready ; we must not keep mother waiting."

Perhaps one reason why Ellen and Mabel enjoyed each other's company so much, was because both were thoughtful children, attentive to what they heard and read, and apt to remember and think of it ; and they liked to talk with each other about the subjects that interested them. They would not have spoken to Alice or Emma or Kate as they did to Miss Curtis and Mr. Murray, for they knew very well that these girls would not understand them. But Ellen's last thought, when she went to sleep that night, was, "I will try to be faithful in what my Father in heaven has given me to do ;" and Mabel's was, "I am glad God has given me a work to do. I will ask Him to teach me what it is, and to help me to do it well."

The days and the weeks went on, and Mabel's sister and brother came home, and vacation arrived, and our two little friends had time for many rambles in the woods, and

many expeditions after berries, and many visits to Mary Allen, whose life was made much pleasanter by their society. They carried fruit and flowers to her, read their prettiest story-books to her, played with her such games as she could enjoy, showed her (for they could sew very nicely) how to do many pretty kinds of work, for which Mrs. Archer willingly furnished the materials. And, while Mary's cheerful, contented disposition made them almost forget her illness, except when she was in too much pain to enjoy their company, they could not help learning a lesson of patience and content from her; and Ellen once told her mother that she never knew before how many things she had to thank God for.

Mrs. Murray would not have been willing to have Ellen associate so constantly with some others of her schoolmates as she did with Mabel; and, though she was herself very fond of the gentle, little girl, she might not have permitted such frequent visits, if Mrs. Archer herself had not particularly requested it. "You cannot tell," she had said one day to

Mrs. Murray, "how glad I am that my poor little girl has found a playmate who can, in some measure, supply her lost sister's place. She was very much attached to Lucia, who was only one year older than herself, and, since Lucia died, Mabel has not seemed to care at all for the society of children, until we came here, and she became acquainted with your Ellen. I shall be very grateful to you, if you will allow your little daughter to be Mabel's companion whenever it is convenient to you." And Mrs. Murray, who well knew that Ellen would see only good examples at Mr. Archer's house, consented, and gave Mabel a cordial welcome whenever she came.

CHAPTER IV.

“THE tenth of August to-day?” said Cecilia Archer, as the family were seated at the breakfast-table. “Then to-morrow is our May-flower’s tenth birthday. What shall I give you, pet?”

“O Cecil! do you remember *our* tenth birthday?” asked Cuthbert, who sat opposite.

“I should think I did; wasn’t it fun? You see, May,” noticing the little girl’s inquiring look, “two or three days before, papa made us a speech of congratulation, all in Latin, which we couldn’t understand, and then he put it into English, and said we were about to complete our first — decade, was it? and it should be celebrated. And he told us to choose any thing we liked best, and, if it was not *too* unreasonable, we should have it.”

“And Cecilia chose to have a great party of boys and girls,” said Cuthbert. “And because

our birthday comes in January, and it was splendid sleighing, I chose a sleighride, and all her visitors to go. Papa said we had made a very good choice, and we should have both."

"And mamma said she had no objection, only the house wouldn't hold so many; and papa said he would attend to that part of the business, but we must make out our invitations. You and Lucia—Wallace wasn't born then—had had the measles, and had gone to stay at grandfather's house; so we were the only ones at home. Well, we were so puzzled about the invitations: I was to ask the girls, and Cuthbert the boys, and I don't know as we ever should have finished our list if mamma had not helped us. She told us to set down first those that we liked very much indeed, and then those who were poor and couldn't often go to parties and sleighrides; but not to ask any one who was rude and ill-behaved. We did not live here then, and the school where we went had two hundred pupils; so there were plenty to choose from. We made our selection at last, and papa wrote the notes,

forty of them in all, and we delivered them ourselves after school."

"Then they all came to our house at two o'clock," Cuthbert went on, "and papa had engaged a great sleigh, big enough to hold us all, and a careful driver, and we had such a merry time. I don't know where we went or how far, but after riding a long time we drove up to the door of a hotel, and there was the landlord, bowing and smiling, and sending a waiter to show 'the young gentlemen' into one room, and a maid to show 'the young ladies' — there was not one of us over twelve years old — into another. And when we had taken off hoods and caps and cloaks and coats, and grown thoroughly warm, we went down, two and two, into the great dining-room, and there were papa and mamma to receive us, and such a supper!"

"And after supper," said Cecilia, as her brother paused, "we went into the parlors and played games till eight o'clock, and then got into the great sleigh again and drove home. And papa said he had never enjoyed a party

more, and that he had not seen a single rude action, or heard a single unkind word. And now, papa, to-morrow will be May's birthday ; let her choose, as we did."

Mr. Archer looked at the little girl. She had entirely forgotten to eat her breakfast, and was sitting with her lips a little parted, her eyes sparkling with interest, and a bright rosy flush on her cheek, listening first to one, then to the other of the speakers. "Should you like it, little daughter?" he asked, gently.

"O papa, if I might!" she said, eagerly.

"Well, you may ; with the same condition, if you choose something not too unreasonable."

"May will not choose a big party, as you and I did, Cecil," said Cuthbert. "She is a little bit of an exclusive."

"Am I?" asked Mabel, innocently. "Is it any thing bad?"

They all laughed. "Your brother meant only that you would prefer a small party of those you loved very much, to a great one, like Cecilia's," answered Mrs. Archer.

"And May, darling," said Cecilia, "as you

haven't any twin to share your pleasures and double them, you must choose something from each of us. You'll have all day to consider about it."

"But I know already," replied the little girl. "I shall want papa to give me ever so much money, to spend as I like."

"Ever so much? I wonder how much that is," remarked Mr. Archer, with a smile.

"I don't know, papa; because I must ask mamma first how much the thing I want to buy will cost."

"Oh, mamma is to be consulted, is she? Then it is all right, and you shall have whatever she says is enough. And what is mamma herself to do for you?"

"She is to let me have the carriage, and Joseph to drive; and I will take Mary Allen and Nelly Murray out to ride, early, before it grows too hot."

"That you shall have, my child," said Mrs. Archer.

"And we?" asked the twins, speaking together.

"You? oh, I can't tell yet. Yes, I can; you shall go to the city with me, and help me buy what I want."

"All right," said Cuthbert, with a meaning glance at his sister; "we'll be on hand." And the breakfast, nearly cold by this time, was resumed and soon despatched.

Mabel had her conference with her mother, and was assured that her wish could be granted; and the twins had also a private consultation, the result of which appeared afterward. The next morning, at breakfast, Mabel found two crisp, new ten-dollar notes on her plate. She looked up at her father. "Thank you, papa; but shall I need it all?"

"Not to purchase the article you wish for, perhaps; but I dare say you will find something else you may fancy. And then you have invited your brother and sister to go with you, and you must give them a luncheon, you know. I'm not sure, after all, that you will have enough," he added. "Mamma, shall I give her more?"

"I think that will do," said Mrs. Archer.

"Cuthbert knows where to take her, and they will not be cheated."

"Why didn't you invite us to ride with you, May?" asked Cecilia. "You should not slight us in favor of other people."

Mabel looked up a little anxiously, but seeing her sister was only in play, she answered, smiling, "I couldn't ask Cuthbert, because he always wants to ride fast, and that would not do for poor little Mary; besides, I want a whole seat for her to lie on. And you know you wouldn't go without him."

"Wouldn't I? But I have to go without him sometimes. Joe is harnessing; do your little friends know what is in store for them?"

"Yes; I told them last night. But isn't it too soon?"

"No, dear," said Mrs. Archer. "I have to go into town this morning with papa, and Joseph is to take us down to the station first. You can start at eight for your ride. I have given directions for a very early dinner, and you can take the half-past twelve train in, and we will all come out together at six."

"Papa and all? Oh, good!" and Mabel clapped her hands with delight. "I shall have as nice a birthday as you did, Cecilia."

"And not half so noisy," added Mr. Archer, rising from the table. "Ring the bell, Cuthbert."

How much Mary enjoyed the ride in the soft, easy carriage, or how Mabel and Ellen chatted to each other and to her, we shall not stay to tell; nor have we any thing to say of the trip to the city in the afternoon, where Mabel made her purchases, with the approbation of her companions, and met her parents at the station at the appointed time. Joseph, when he came with the carriage to meet them, looked amused at the number of packages, and Mabel herself said, "Why, mamma, you must have done a great deal of shopping."

Supper was ready for them on their arrival; and after justice had been done to the light biscuits, the fresh blackberries, and the sweet milk, Mr. Archer said, "And now, little one, may I see your purchase?"

"Oh, yes, papa;" and taking it from its

wrappings, she showed him a pretty musical box, arranged for four tunes. "But I didn't want it for myself. Poor Mary has to be alone so much, and she does love music dearly. I have carried my little music-box sometimes, and when I saw how much she enjoyed it, I thought if she could have one a little larger, not too large for her to lift and wind herself, it would be a great comfort to her. I know it would to me."

"And did it take all the money?"

"Oh, no; it cost twelve dollars, and I had enough for our luncheon, and to buy a book for each of us three, and I have some left. I was not unreasonable, was I?"

"I think you were both reasonable and considerate, my child. Our Father has given us more than enough for our own wants, and it is our duty to contribute to the comfort of others. I hope we shall none of us ever forget to do so."

Cuthbert, who had left the room, now returned with two rather large packages, which he placed at his little sister's feet, saying, with

a low bow, "Be gracious enough, Queen Mab, to receive the humble offerings of your sister and brother."

With great astonishment, Mabel began to unfold the first, which seemed to be a common pasteboard box ; but from it, when opened, she lifted, wrapped in tissue paper, a medium-sized doll, fully dressed, even to the hat trimmed with blue ribbons, and having auburn hair and blue eyes. "You see," Cecilia explained, "I happened to spy this little Nelly Murray of a doll in a toy-shop the last time I was in town, and I thought I could give you nothing you would like so well as your favorite play-mate."

"Mamma, see ; it does look like her !" exclaimed Mabel, flushing with delight. "Thank you, dear Cecilia. But here is another doll, just the same size, and dressed almost the same. Is that for me, too ?"

"That is just as you please. I fancied the little Gentianella there might be homesick travelling alone, and I told them to put in a Mayflower to keep her company. I dare say

you know some little girl who would like the brown eyes as well as you do the blue eyes."

"Oh, I know; you meant it for Nelly. What a dear, good sister you are. And oh, Cuthbert," as a pretty doll's carriage appeared among the wrappings her brother had been taking off, "how did you know just what I wanted? What nice times we shall have! And mamma, you have not seen what Nelly gave me this morning: the prettiest little dolly's bedquilt, made of silk pieces, that she sewed and lined herself; and it just fits the little bed in my baby-house. Everybody is almost too kind to me."

As it was vacation time, nothing prevented Mabel from going the next day to carry the doll and music-box to their destination; and, at her request, Ellen accompanied her to see Mary. It chanced to be, not a rainy day, but damp and chilly, and Mary had had what her mother called one of her poor turns. She was in considerable pain, but brightened up at seeing the pleasant young faces; and her delight could find no words when Mabel set the box

by her bedside and touched the spring. She lay listening in silent pleasure, and as Mabel bent down and whispered, "It is your own, Mary; I brought it for you," she drew the sweet little face down to hers and kissed it, and Mabel felt her cheek wet with tears. They did not stay long, lest they should tire the invalid too much; and, as they left her, Mary said, with a bright smile, laying her thin hand on the box, "I shall never feel lonely now."

"Does not your new doll please you, Ellen?" asked Mrs. Murray, the same afternoon, as she noticed her little girl sitting in rather a listless way, with the doll in her lap.

"Yes, mother; I think it is lovely. It was very kind of Cecilia Archer, wasn't it, to think of me?" And then came a sigh.

"Very kind, indeed. But is it a reason for sighing that the doll is lovely, and Cecilia kind?"

"Why, no indeed, mother. Only I was thinking how nice it would be if I had as much money as Mabel, and could make people happy so easily."

"Is it that you wish people to be happy, or that you would like the pleasure of giving? It is a pleasure, I know; but it is one we can all have without much money. Mabel was more pleased with the little bedquilt you made yourself than she would have been with any thing bought in the city; and you made Agnes happy very easily this morning by giving her your doll, Jessie. And if you wish only that people should be happy, it doesn't make much difference whether yourself or some one else has the power and the will to do it. Did Mary like the music-box better as Mabel's gift, than if it had been yours?"

"I don't know; only I should think she would love Mabel best. I *can't* be so good and sweet as she is, mother."

"Be yourself, my dear; your true, good self, and that will be sufficient. I suppose Mr. Archer gave Mabel the money?"

"Yes, it was her birthday present; she might have spent it for herself, but May never seems to think of herself."

"And that is just why we all love her so

much. But don't you see, Ellen, that it is not the value of the gift, so much as the love which prompts it, that makes it dear to us, or valuable in the sight of our heavenly Father? The ten dollars your father saves from his earnings to give to some charitable object, are quite as much, considered in that way, as Mr. Archer's one or two hundreds; and the little kindnesses you can do may be the means of as much happiness as Mabel's costlier gifts. So I think, darling, we will not wish to be richer than it pleases our Father. He knows better than we do how much is best for us to have, as I know better than Edmund how much it is best for him to eat."

Ellen came and laid her head on her mother's shoulder. "What a silly child I am," she said. "You are always telling me such nice, good things, and I think I will remember. And then I forget it all, and get discontented again. Shall I ever be good and wise?"

"I hope you will, dear. I think you are improving as fast as I should expect. We always make allowance for some silliness in

children, because they have not lived long enough to find out much for themselves. Only they must keep on trying to do right. Now run and play with Agnes and Edmund, and don't be afraid that you will not be both wise and good in time."

"I'm sure I ought to be, with such a dear, good mother," answered Ellen, with a kiss; and then she sped away to the big tree, under which Agnes and Edmund were playing: for the sun had broken through the clouds, and the sky was bright and clear again.

It is not worth while to make our story much longer. Ellen forgot to be discontented, or conquered the feeling; and Alice Bryant, who soon grew tired of her playmates, as she did of every thing else, found a new companion, nearer her own age, in a family who had just moved into the neighborhood, and no longer cared to walk and talk with Ellen; while the friendship between Ellen and Mabel kept increasing. They are growing, not only older and wiser, but better, every year; for they wish to do right and try to do right, and

they can help each other. When Mabel grows discouraged over a difficult lesson, or a puzzling piece of work, Ellen's energy and perseverance help her on; and when Ellen is vexed and impatient with her schoolmates, Mabel's sweet gentleness calms her into good humor again. Mabel gains health and strength by joining in Ellen's work and play, and learns from Mrs. Murray many useful household lessons; and Ellen, with her mother's consent, shares Mabel's lessons in music and dancing, and learns many pleasant things from Mrs. Archer, who is as good as she is beautiful. So we leave them, happy in their homes, happy in each other's love, growing up to be useful, happy, Christian women.

THE CHERRY-WOOD RULER.



T was a dark, chilly November day. The rain dropped from the leafless branches upon the withered grass and dry leaves, and fell in slow, drizzling showers, except when a sudden gust swept it against the windows, making the drops chase each other quickly down the panes. But in Miss Heywood's school-room, all was cheerful and warm and pleasant; and the dozen bright young faces bent over their books and slates, bore no trace of the clouds out of doors. If the day had been pleasant, twenty little girls would have been present; but the unpleasant weather had kept at home those who lived at a distance.

Near one of the windows, which looked out into a field, green and pleasant in summer, with

large trees here and there to give it shade, but now dull and dreary like every thing else, sat a little girl with black eyes and wavy black hair cut short, who was named Matilda Hartwell, but whom her companions called Matty. She had been very busy with her arithmetic lesson, but finding one or two of the questions rather difficult, she had piled up her books, laid her head upon them, and was idly watching the rain-drops as they followed each other down the glass, and listening to the wind in the trees. Hark! was that a voice? a very soft, low voice, scarcely to be heard, and it seemed to come from the desk where she sat. Matty listened attentively; surely, it was a voice, and, of all odd things, it must be her slate pencil speaking.

“It seems to me, good friends,” said the little voice, “that as our young mistress does not seem to need our services just now, we might employ the time to advantage by telling something of our own histories. I, for one, should be very much interested, and though I shall not have many things to relate, I am

willing to do my part to amuse the company."

"A very good idea," answered the ruler; "and some of us, doubtless, have had adventures enough. Our friend, the paper, in the portfolio yonder, must have seen a great many things since she left the Georgia cotton fields, where she was born." The paper rustled her leaves softly, but made no reply.

"But I think," remarked the silver pencil-case, a little impatiently, "that if some one does not begin, the time will pass away before we hear any thing. I propose, therefore, that our friend the ruler should give his experience first."

"I shall not have any thing wonderful to tell," said the ruler, "for I have had a very quiet life; but if the company wish, I will try to entertain them. You all know, I dare say, that I am made of cherry-wood; and my first recollections are of forming a part of a large old cherry-tree, which stood at some little distance from an old-fashioned house in the country. Although, as I said, mine was a quiet

life, it was a very happy one. It was pleasant in the spring-time to feel the life stirring all over the old tree, and the young leaves and buds coming forth; and when the blossoms opened, and filled the air with fragrance, and the masses of snowy flowers made the tree look almost like an immense white rose, how lovely it was! And the bees came, and the bright little humming-birds, too, for the honey in the blossoms; and the south wind rustled pleasantly in the young leaves, and the spring-showers came pattering softly down, and all around us the field was green with grass and bright with flowers. And then came warmer days, and the blossoms fell off, and the tiny green fruit appeared; and each little cherry grew and swelled, and the sun and the air ripened them all, and they hung on their stems, waving in the wind, tempting to all eyes. There were several cherry-trees in the field, or garden, perhaps I should say, for other flowers than wild ones grew there; and some trees bore clear, bright-red cherries, some yellow, rosy on one side, some very dark, but all sweet and

rich and juicy. And the children came to gather the fruit and enjoy it, and to play under the trees; merry times the little people had, and we, the branches above, enjoyed it too.

“Then, when the winter came, and the leaves fell off, and the birds and flowers were gone, other pleasures came instead. The snow lay thick on the ground, and kept it warm, and the trees were all busily preparing for the spring to come; for it is a mistake to think they do nothing but sleep all winter. As soon as their fruits are gone, they begin to lay up all the nourishment they can get from the ground and the air and the sun, to make new leaves and fruit another year. So we were busy and happy. And we did not lose the children’s company; they came with their sleds, and they built snow-houses, and snow-men, and forts; and the harder the wind blew, the louder they laughed, and their rosy cheeks grew rosier, and their bright eyes brighter. Plenty of children there were, for six brothers and sisters lived in the house close by, and they had many playmates.

“Among these children of the house was one little girl, about as large as those who come here to school, whom the others called Kitty. She was a merry little creature, full of frolic, and loving play far better than work or study; though she liked reading, and often came with her book to sit in the great cherry-tree among the leaves and blossoms. But Kitty’s idle habits brought her into frequent trouble; and I would see her coming late from school, with red eyes and tear-stained cheeks, when her lessons had been imperfectly recited.” The ruler paused in its story; Miss Heywood had just called Matty’s class to the blackboard. But the little girl did not move. “I think Matty is asleep, Miss Heywood,” said one of the children; “shall I wake her?”

“No, my dear, let her alone,” was the answer. The recitation commenced, and the story proceeded.

“One day Kitty came to her favorite seat in the cherry-tree, with slow step and downcast eyes. She had a satchel of school-books, instead of a story, in her hand; and when she had

climbed up into the place she liked best, and hung her bag on a broken branch, she sat still, thinking aloud. 'They call me idle Kitty, and say I never shall know any thing or be good for any thing. I wish I was a kitty, a real little kitty, with four paws and a tail and a furry coat: then I could play all day long, and nobody would find fault with me. And now everybody blames me, and I am not happy at all.' And poor Kitty began to cry. But perhaps some voice we did not hear, whispered to her and she listened to it; for presently she spoke again. 'Well, perhaps it is my own fault, and I know I am idle and don't learn my lessons well. I wonder if I should be any happier if I did; I've half a mind to try. Besides, Sister Mary told me last night that it made them all feel ashamed and sorry; and, though I don't see why they need to care, I suppose they do. Mary says patience and perseverance — which means I must keep on trying, I believe — will conquer almost every thing, and that I can learn my lessons if I will. I wonder,' — and Kitty looked up through the

branches at the clear blue sky, as if she thought she might see through or beyond it,— ‘I wonder if our Father in heaven would help me learn my lessons. Mary says He will, if I ask Him and try hard myself; and she is a great deal older than I, and ought to know.’ Then Kitty leaned her face down against the tree, and we heard her whisper a prayer; and then she took a book from her bag and began to study. Once in a while she would sigh, and say ‘Oh dear!’ but she did not give up; and, after a time, she shut the book, saying, ‘Well, you’re learned, for one. Let’s have another.’ By and by came her playmates, looking for her and calling her; but she sat still and made no sound, so they ran off again, and she kept on with her lessons. More than half of that bright summer afternoon she sat in her nook, only changing her position a little when the sunlight came too much in her eyes; and finally she dropped the satchel of books down to the ground, and, with a shout of glee, climbed quickly down herself and ran into the house.

“But not to stay. She came back again soon with other children, and I never saw Kitty more full of frolic than she was then. After that, she used to come often to the tree to learn her lessons, and whenever they were very hard she would say, ‘Patience and perseverance, Kitty.’ By degrees, she ceased to be kept after school was done; and one autumn day she came home wearing the silver medal, that showed she was at the head of her class. Well, the months went on, and the years, and the old tree grew older, and Kitty changed from a plump little child to a tall girl; but she kept her love for her old seat, and she had gained a love for her books and studies; and, by many little signs, we knew she had never forgotten where to go for help and strength. One night there came a very violent wind, which did much damage to the trees all around, and it tore off nearly half of the old cherry-tree and strewed the limbs on the ground. The next morning, Kitty and her father came to look at the wreck. ‘You’ll never sit in your tree any more, Kitty,’ said he. ‘That great limb you

liked so well is all torn off.' 'Yes,' said Kitty, thoughtfully, 'I have spent many happy hours there. Father, could something be made from that largest branch? I should like to keep a piece of it for a remembrance.' He thought he could do something with it, and some time after he brought Kitty a pretty little work-box, with 'Patience and Perseverance' in golden letters on the inside of the lid, and a ruler, both made of the old cherry-tree. Of course, you all know the ruler, and that is the end of my story."

"But what became of Kitty?" asked the slate pencil, eagerly.

"Oh, she grew up to be an intelligent, useful woman; and now she teaches school, and you may see her this very minute at her table, telling one of her pupils about her lesson."

"Aunt Kate! was it Aunt Kate?" cried Matty, starting up. There was a general laugh; the children were chatting together and eating their luncheon, and one said, "Had a good nap, Matty?"

"Why, — but I haven't been asleep, have I?"


O Aunt Kate! my ruler—the cherry ruler you said grandpa made — has been telling such a funny story; and it was about you. Was it true, auntie?”

Miss Heywood laughed. How did she know what the ruler had been saying? The girls begged Matty to tell them the story, but she would not. She said she would tell Aunt Kate some time. “Only I found out that patience and perseverance would be a good motto for me, and I mean to remember it. And, auntie, if I was asleep, I’m sorry I waked up, because the pencil and the paper and the other things were going to tell stories, too, and now I shall not hear them.”

How the children laughed at this! But Miss Heywood said, “I think, Matty, that if you learn to be patient and persevering, your time will have been well spent, whether you were asleep or awake; and, perhaps, you may hear the other stories some time.”

Do you think she ever did?

LITTLE IDA'S WISH.

“ WONDER what little girls are good for,” said little Ida Harvey, with a sigh. Any one who had looked into Mr. Harvey’s sitting-room just then would have thought it a very pleasant scene. It was an evening in April, and the setting sun shone full into the south-western windows, lighting up the room, and resting on Ida’s curly head, as it lay on her father’s knee. An open fire made it pleasantly warm, and Charley, who was just recovering from a fever, lay on the sofa, his head pillowed on his mother’s lap, while Fred, on the hearth-rug, was playing very gently with a pretty kitten. Frances, the eldest sister, sat by the window with her drawing, and Marian had just cleared the supper table. “I wonder what little girls are good for,” repeated Ida.

"Good to pet," said Marian, dropping a bright-yellow orange into the child's apron, as she passed her.

"Good to look at," said Frances, who had been trying to make a sketch of her father and Ida.

"Good to play with," said Fred, rolling a ball for his kitten to follow.

"Good to stay with me when mother is busy," said invalid Charley.

"Good to make women of by and by," added papa, patting the rosy cheek.

"Good to love," said mamma, with a smile.

"I didn't mean that," answered Ida. "Little girls can't *do* any good."

"Can't they?" asked Mr. Harvey. "Who always has my hat and cane ready when I go out, and my slippers and easy-chair when I come home?"

"Who is never too tired or too busy to bring me what I want, and carries my messages without making any mistakes?" said Frances.

"Who waits on me and reads to me when I am sick?" inquired Charley.

"Who finds my school-books when I can't, and picks up all the things I leave about?" asked Fred.

"I wonder who it is that helps me about my work, and puts away all the dishes nicely," said Marian.

"And who is always ready to help any of us? Whose little feet and hands save time and trouble for the elder ones?" added mamma. "For my part, I don't think we could do very well without our little girl."

But Ida shook her head again. "Those are all such *little* things," she said. "I wish I could do ever so much good, like the people we read about."

"The great chestnut-tree by the gate was a little nut once, darling," said Frances. "Don't be in a hurry to become a great woman."

And then Mr. Harvey laid down his newspaper, and said, gravely, "I think my little Ida has been reading too much lately. If it will not interfere with the girls' Italian lessons, I have a story for you and Fred; and Charley, too, if he likes to hear it."

"The lessons will not come till Ida is asleep," said Marian ; and she drew down the curtains, wheeled the round table before the fire, and lighted the evening lamp. Frances brought the work-baskets ; mamma took her knitting, after shaking up Charley's pillows that he might lie comfortably ; Ida left her stool to Fred and his sleepy kitten, and nestled in her father's arms, and Mr. Harvey began his story.

"Once upon a time, how long ago I cannot say, far away among the woods and mountains, lived two tiny little brooks. The grass was green around them, and the tall trees bent lovingly over them, and wild flowers grew near by, some on the very brink, so that they could see their faces in the bright, clear water if they liked ; birds came there to drink, squirrels lived among the trees, and all was beautiful and quiet and happy. No, not all ; for one of these little brooks had allowed itself to become discontented, and it wished it could go out into the great world and do something. One day, a bright summer day, a dove came to drink,



MR. HARVEY TELLING HIS STORY.—PAGE 96.

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and a crow, who was sitting on a dead branch not far off, entered into conversation with her.

“‘A fine day this, madam,’ said the crow. ‘You are not an inhabitant of this wood, I think?’

“‘No,’ answered the dove, ‘but I like to come here, it is so cool and shady; and this little brook has such clear, bright water that I come to drink it.’

“‘Yes; the brooks are well enough in their way,’ remarked Mr. Crow, with a conceited tipping of his head one side; ‘but, after all, they don’t amount to much. Now, where I live, not far from my wood, I mean, and not very distant from this place, there is a large stream which turns mills; that is something to see, I can tell you. The water comes down in a broad, white sheet, glistening in the sunshine like silver, and dashes into foam at the bottom, and then goes on again, smooth and quiet, to the next fall; that is far finer than these miserable little brooks, which can do no one any good, and only give drink to a few flowers and birds.’

“‘I have seen the mill-stream,’ replied the gentle dove, ‘but I love the woodland brooks far better. It is too noisy by the mills, and there are too many people there.’

“‘Well, tastes differ,’ returned the crow. ‘One would have supposed that so pretty a bird as you are would like to be seen and admired. But I have been farther than the mills; as far as the river, miles away, where boats sail and big vessels come up to the town sometimes. That is fine. If you will come with me, I shall be delighted to show you the way.’

“‘Thank you,’ said the dove; ‘but I must go home now. I have no time for travelling. And thank you, too, pretty brook, for your cool, sweet water. Good-by.’ The dove flew away, and the crow, after watching her a moment very gravely, sailed off towards the mill-stream, with a loud ‘caw! caw!’

“‘Did you hear what those birds were talking about, little sister?’ said one brook to the other. ‘I should like to be a mill-stream, too. I am tired of living here and doing nothing.’

“‘But I don’t think it is nothing,’ replied the other streamlet. ‘Only see how green we make the grass, and we help to nourish the plants and trees; and the birds and other creatures all love us, and the soft sunlight falls warm upon us from among the branches, and every thing is so beautiful here. I think we should be very happy. I like to see all the living creatures around; the shy rabbits, and the squirrels, and the birds, and the frogs, and the fox, that comes once in awhile; and don’t you remember, not long ago, some children came here, and how delighted they were? I think we are doing good now.’

“‘Oh, you are content to be nobody,’ was the not very pleasant answer. ‘But I mean to be something in the world. I saw which way the crow went, and I am going in that direction. Perhaps you will hear of *my* turning mill-wheels by and by.’

“‘I would rather stay among the trees and flowers and birds, as long as I may,’ answered the contented brook. ‘I know I am doing what I can to help others, and that is enough

for me at present. If there is more work for me to do, I shall find it by and by. Stay in the woods, brother dear, and be happy.'

"But no; the little things which its Creator gave it to do, were quite despised by this ambitious little stream, and when it came to an opening in the woods, it turned aside and went into the open country. Pleasant it was at first, to run through fields and meadows, and feel the warm sunshine upon its waters; but as the summer went on, the sunlight grew too bright, and the warmth too oppressive, and the foolish little brook almost wished itself back again. But it remembered the mill-stream, and pressed onward, and by and by came to a rock over which it flashed and fancied itself a waterfall. And then, after many wanderings, it came to a dry, sandy plain, where there were no trees, or even grass, or any thing to shade it from the heat, and the sun dried up its waters, and the sand choked it, and there it dwindled away and perished. Poor, foolish, discontented little thing that it was!

"And now let us see what became of the

other. Happy and useful, this one rippled along under the leafy trees, smiling back to the sky that smiled down upon it, doing its little amount of good in its quiet manner, and going steadily along in the way prepared for it, when, one day, as it was gayly running down a slope, it heard a faint, musical voice a little way off, and presently another rivulet, scarcely larger than itself, appeared. 'Why, where did you come from; and where are you going?' asked the new-comer. 'I came from the woods yonder; it has been almost all woods so far; and I don't know where I am going; it is just where I am told to go.' 'You are going my way, at least,' said the second brook, which seemed as joyous a little stream as could well be found. 'Let us join together, and we can run faster.' Our cheerful little friend agreed, and the two ran merrily on. But after some time, behold another streamlet and another, some larger, some smaller, came to join their course; starting from different homes, all they knew was that they were to follow the path marked out for them; and so they went obediently on.

“‘This is a beautiful river,’ said a traveller, pausing to gaze on the broad, clear stream that flowed before him. ‘I will make my home here.’ The little brook with which my story began, now joined with so many others, heard and wondered. ‘Is it possible that we, so small and weak, can have made a river?’ it thought. But the beautiful river went on its appointed way, and other rivers came and poured in their waters, and then others; and its bed grew deeper and its current stronger, and cities were built on its margin, and ships and great steamboats floated upon it, carrying hundreds of people, and merchandise of all kinds; and when at last it reached the ocean, it formed a beautiful bay, where the largest vessels might ride safely at anchor, and the dwellers in the great city at its mouth could see the forests of masts almost as thick as the trees in the wood where the brook first lived.”


“And papa,” asked the eager Fred, “what was the great river’s name?”

“I cannot tell; the Hudson, perhaps. All great rivers are made just in that way, by the

union of the little streams and rivulets. And you see that being content to do a little good now, if it is what God gives us to do, may lead to doing great good afterward if He pleases. But isn't my little girl growing sleepy?"

"No, papa," replied Ida; "but it is time for me to go to bed. And I will not wish to be a mill-stream, or a great river, but I will be like the contented little brook, and try to make those around me happy."

FLORA'S DREAM.

“ DON'T like this work very well,” said Flora Brainard, one afternoon. “Do you like any thing very well, Flora?” asked a lady sitting by; and her tone was rather sad.

“Why, yes, Aunt Ruth; I like to play and to read and to make visits and to have company.”

“But not to work or to be useful to others, or to try to please them, I suppose?”

“I suppose not,” answered Flora, in a low tone, as if rather ashamed of the confession.

Miss Walton said no more; and the little girl, slowly, and with evident unwillingness, went on with her sewing; and while they are occupied we will tell a little about them. Flora was an orphan: a friendless child, without

parents or home or any one to care for her ; and Miss Walton, who had no parents, no sisters, and only one brother, who lived in a distant State, had taken the poor little thing home, because she had known and loved the child's mother when they were school-girls. The kind-hearted lady had fed Flora, clothed her, taught her, allowed her to call her "aunt," given her books and toys, endeavored to teach her to be a good child, and, in every possible way, had tried to make her happy. For nearly five years now, Flora had had this pleasant home ; and she certainly ought to have been grateful and happy. But she was idle and disobedient, and, what was still worse, she was not conscientious ; she could not be trusted. If Miss Walton left her to her lessons or her sewing, Flora would stop to play or read ; if Miss Walton went away, Flora took advantage of her absence to do what she knew her kind aunt would disapprove ; and when she was questioned, instead of telling the plain truth, she would try to deceive. Now do you think that Flora was a very naughty child ? True,

she was often very naughty ; but have you not mothers who have done more for you than Miss Walton had done for Flora ? and do you not sometimes disobey, and, perhaps, deceive them ?

Some people wondered that Miss Walton continued to keep the child ; but she pitied and loved her in spite of her faults, and knew that there was no one else in the world to care for her. She knew that the child's mother had been poor and ill, and unable to care properly for her ; and that her father, who had been fond of drinking, had often treated her very harshly ; and she tried to believe it was timidity or fear of punishment which led her to deceive so often, and hoped that she would overcome the fault. I do not suppose Flora knew how very much her misconduct grieved her kind friend ; I do not suppose, when she pouted and muttered cross words to herself, and would not do as she was told, that she thought or remembered how ungrateful and unkind she was to the only person who loved her enough to take care of her ; for if children

could know how much pain they give their friends, and how wrong it is to behave so, they never would do it, I am sure.

After some time Flora had finished her sewing, and Aunt Ruth sent her to her own room to stay until she was ready to go out with her. It was a pleasant summer afternoon, and Flora sat on the floor by the low window, looking out at the garden and the fields and the river in the distance, and the bright blue sky. She did feel a little ashamed of her idleness and complaining, but she tried not to care, and to think of something else. How long she sat there she did not know, but a quick, sudden call roused her. "Flora! Flora! come quickly!" She ran down stairs and found Miss Walton lying on the bed, looking very pale and ill. "Call Mrs. White, my dear, and then put on your bonnet and go for the doctor; I am afraid I am going to be sick." Flora went quickly enough, for she was rather frightened; and when the doctor came he looked very grave, and told Mrs. White, who lived in the other part of the house, that he hoped she would be

able to stay, as her neighbor needed good care. Mrs. White was a good nurse and a kind friend, too, and she and the doctor did all they could for the sick lady. And now Flora could do very much as she pleased ; there was no one to tell her when to study or sew or read ; she could play all the time, except when Mrs. White sent her of an errand, or asked her to do something about the work, or to sit with Aunt Ruth awhile. But this last she did not like to do ; it made her feel uncomfortable, for Aunt Ruth did not seem to know her, though she talked about her, and cried when she told how disappointed she was that Flora did not behave better. So four, five days went on, and then there was no more need of any one to sit with Aunt Ruth or take care of her ; for on the fifth day she died. Mrs. White sent for Mr. Walton, and he and his wife came ; and then the funeral took place, and Flora saw her kind friend's body laid in the grave, and went back to the house which could not be her home any more.

“ What is to be done with the little girl ? ”

asked Mrs. White; and Flora, in the next room, heard the question, and listened for the answer. She had not thought, until now, what was to become of her.

"Send her back where she came from," said Mrs. Walton, carelessly. "I always thought it a great piece of nonsense in Ruth to take the child at all."

"Ruth loved her very much," said Mrs. White. "I think it would grieve her to have that done. She meant to have her learn some trade when she grew up; I have heard her plans often."

"I suppose the child has no friends," said Mrs. Walton. "She can go to the Orphan Asylum, can't she?"

"Hadn't we better take her home with us? at least, till we can find some other place for her?" said Mr. Walton, who seemed a kind-hearted man.

"Well, if you like; I suppose she has clothes enough. She can take care of the baby and wait on the table, and do such things."

So the house and furniture and all were sold: even Flora's books and playthings, and the pretty little bureau and chair, a birthday gift from Aunt Ruth; and Flora went away with Mr. and Mrs. Walton to their distant home, and had no more play, but hard work all day; and no more love, but harsh words and frequent blows; no chance to do as she pleased, now.

After a time Mrs. Walton found some one to take her who wanted a little girl to help about house, and here she had to work harder than before; no one called her "my child" or "my dear;" no one spoke kindly to her or tried to teach her to do right; she was very unhappy. And now, when she thought of the pleasant home she used to have, and kind Aunt Ruth, who was always trying to make her happy and good, she saw how unkind and ungrateful she had been, and longed to see that dear face once more. She had thought and said that she did not love Aunt Ruth, because she made her work sometimes, and punished her when she did very wrong; but now

she would have been willing to do any thing to get back to her. But that she could not do, and she sat down by the window and cried bitterly: quite as much from shame as sorrow. "Oh, Aunt Ruth, come back to me!" she sobbed. "I will try to be a better girl." A hand was laid on her shoulder; she started, thinking it was her harsh mistress; but it was Aunt Ruth's own hand, and Aunt Ruth's own voice said, pleasantly, "Why, Flora! not dressed to go out yet? and you came up here two hours ago; what can you have been doing?"

Flora rubbed her eyes, looked round the room bewildered, and then sprang into Aunt Ruth's arms and clasped her tight. "Oh, auntie, I have been asleep; and I had such an awful dream! I thought you were dead, and I had to go somewhere else to live, and the people were so cross to me! I am so glad it was only a dream. I do love you, Aunt Ruth,—I really do; and I will try to leave off my naughty ways and be obedient. What should I do without you, you dear, dear auntie?"

Miss Walton was amazed; in all the years Flora had lived with her, she had never once said she loved her; never once come to be taken in her arms like this. She had never seemed to care much for any one, and it had grieved Miss Walton very much that her own affection for the child met with no return. But Flora's heart had waked up at last, and her conscience, too; and it seemed as if she could not find ways enough of expressing her new feelings. Miss Walton suspected that Flora had overheard part of a conversation between herself and Mrs. White, in relation to her future prospects, and that this had been the cause of her dream. But whatever was the cause, Aunt Ruth could not but rejoice at the effect; for, I am glad to say, Flora did try to be a better child. When she was asked to do something she did not like, she remembered all Aunt Ruth's kindness, and felt ashamed not to do it; and she tried to show by her conduct the love that had waked in her heart, when she thought her kind friend was lost to her for ever. "Because it might have been


all true," she thought to herself, "and, perhaps, it will be true, some time, so I will try to make Aunt Ruth happy while I can stay with her, and try to learn all I can."

Flora made a great many failures, and did a great many naughty things, after this dream came to her, but she did not leave off trying; and she learned to tell the truth and ask forgiveness when she did wrong, so that Miss Walton was at last quite happy with the little orphan girl, who had made her so much trouble for the first years. And when Aunt Ruth was ill, as she really was some time after, Flora was as kind and good a little nurse as you could find; always ready to sit by her and wait upon her, or to do any thing that could soothe or help her; so that Aunt Ruth loved her more than she had done before, and Mrs. White said Flora was such a different child she hardly knew her.

And what made the difference was simply that Flora had begun to love her aunt; and when we love people it becomes far easier to

do as they wish. If we love our earthly friends, we wish to please them; if we love our heavenly Father, we wish to please Him.
"Love is the fulfilling of the law "

COUSIN LIZZIE'S STORY.

“ERE we are, Cousin Lizzie; now for a Sunday story!” and a troop of children came into the quiet room where a lady sat at the window, reading by the fading light of an autumn day.

“Only, not if you don’t wish it, Cousin Lizzie,” added the eldest, a bright, pleasant-looking girl of twelve. “Papa says your never considering your own comfort is no reason why we should never consider it; and mamma told us we should annoy you so, you would never wish to come here again.”

“Then it seems I have two people to consider my comfort, at least,” replied Cousin Lizzie: “papa and his daughter Grace. But I have no objection to telling you a story; I have been reading one which I think very interesting, and perhaps you are not acquainted with it yet.”

"Is it in the Bible?" asked Harry, glancing at the book in his cousin's hand. "I like Bible stories when people tell them; but I never care much to read them."

"Perhaps you will like them better when you are older, and can find out the meanings in them. Now, if you will sit still, I will begin." Susie, the youngest, and her playfellow, Robert, had already established themselves on the lounge, by Cousin Lizzie's side; Harry and Sam threw themselves down before the fire, and Grace took a low rocking-chair, and let her eyes rest on her cousin's face and the bright sunset clouds by turns. And this is the story Cousin Lizzie told:—

"You all, unless it may be little Susie, have seen the Red Sea on your maps, and you know there is a country west of it, called Egypt, and one east of it, called Arabia. Not far from the Red Sea, and on the northern borders of Arabia, there lived, a great many hundred years ago, a race of people who were brave, intelligent, and enterprising. Their country was not large, and it had a range of rocky

hills on one side, and a desert on the other. But they lived on good terms with the roving tribes of the desert, and caravans went to and from the Red Sea, where they had a harbor, and the shore of the Mediterranean, freely, carrying merchandise for the ships of Tyre and Sidon. They were rather a wealthy people, too, and had many comforts and luxuries in their dwellings. North of this nation lived another, descended from the same ancestors, and speaking much the same language, who had come into the country a long time before, subdued some of the inhabitants, driven out others, and taken possession of the land. Now the king of this northern nation had, or fancied he had, some cause of quarrel with his southern neighbor ; or, perhaps, he only wished to conquer that land and add it to his dominions. Whatever his motive may have been, he sent a large army thither, with his best general to command it, and, I think, he accompanied them himself. This general was a brave and skilful soldier, but fierce and cruel and revengeful ; and he very often urged the

king (who was his uncle, though they were of nearly the same age) to harsh and savage actions, which the king would otherwise not have committed. The army marched towards the south, and the people of the threatened land prepared for defence. They, too, raised an army, and their king led them himself; and with him went his chief nobles and the valiant young men of the country, who were not willing to have their native land conquered by strangers. The two armies met in a valley, and the invaders were victorious; eighteen thousand of their opponents were killed, the king among them, and the rest fled to their homes, to bear the terrible tidings. They well knew how cruel the triumphant general would be, and they feared his coming; so all who could, fled from their cities and villages. Some took refuge in the rocky hills; some in the western desert, among the roving tribes there; some resolved to defend their cities to the last, and, if killed themselves, to kill first as many of their enemies as possible. But the victorious army pressed on, destroying the

fields of grain, burning the villages, taking the valuable things from the cities, and placing a garrison of armed men in every large city and town, to keep the inhabitants in subjection. All the men, and even all the boys they could seize upon, they put to death, some of them with tortures I cannot describe; for they thought if the boys grew up into men they might try to liberate themselves."

"Oh, how cruel!" exclaimed Harry. "I did not know people could be so wicked."

"War is always cruel, Harry; it cannot help being so, even when conducted in the most merciful way possible; and I am afraid there are people as wicked in the world now as there were then. Besides, you must remember that these people were semi-barbarians, who lived long before Jesus came to teach us to love our enemies."

"I would have run away," said little Robert; "I wouldn't stay to be killed; I would hide in the rocks."

"A great many did so, I have no doubt; all saved themselves who could. When the king

went forth to meet the enemy, he left his son, a little child, in the royal palace, with his attendants and some soldiers to guard him. I do not know whether the child's mother was living, but I think not, as no mention is made of her. When the terrible news came that the army was defeated and the king killed, those who were in the palace held a hurried consultation as to what was to be done. If they remained there, the little prince and his attendants would surely be killed; but where could they go? Now the king of Egypt, on the other side of the Red Sea, had always been on good terms with the child's father, and he was known to be a kind-hearted man; so some one proposed that they should carry the orphan to him and entreat his protection. This was thought best; and, having hastily collected what valuables they could, — gold, jewels, and clothing, — the guards and attendants left the palace and the city, taking the child with them. They feared the bands of soldiers who were ravaging the land, and, instead of taking any road which might have led among them,

they went to the south-west, by less travelled ways, and reached the borders of the Red Sea in safety. Crossing the gulf at the north-east, they entered the desert land, and were cordially welcomed by their old allies, the roving tribes, (much like the Arabs of our own time),—a party of whom accompanied them to the boundary of Egypt, and left them with good wishes and kind words. Then they made their way easily to the royal city, and asked an audience of the king.”

“Was the king Pharaoh?” asked Sam, who had been reading about Moses and the Israelites.

“He was Pharaoh, because that was usually the name or title of the king of Egypt; but not the Pharaoh whom you have been reading about. What I am telling you happened long after.”

“Well, go on, cousin,” said Harry, impatiently. “Did they see the king? and was he kind to them?”

“Yes, he received them kindly, and listened to their story; he promised to protect the little

orphan, set apart one of his own palaces for him and his attendants to live in, and ordered a certain amount of provision and a sufficient sum of money to be furnished every month for their support. As the little prince grew older, his affectionate disposition and his intelligence attracted the notice of the king; he became very fond of him, and had him instructed in every thing that was then considered necessary to the children of royal families. He was frequently at the king's own residence, treated as if he was an own son of the monarch, and every thing provided to make him happy. When he grew up to be a young man, Pharaoh, perhaps wishing to keep him always with him, gave him a fair, loving girl for a wife,—the young sister of his own beautiful queen. With her the prince lived happily, and after a time a little boy was born to them, who, you may suppose, was very dear to his father and mother. And the queen loved the baby, too; and when the time came for him to be weaned, she would not intrust her sister's child to the care of hired nurses, but took charge of him

herself; and when he was old enough, he shared in all the lessons and the pleasures of the queen's own children. Don't you think the exiled prince should have been content?"

"Yes," answered Robert and Sammy. "Pharaoh was real good to him." Harry was silent.

"Well, Harry?" said Cousin Lizzie, inquiringly.

"It was all very nice," answered Harry, slowly, "but—I should have wanted to go back and drive out those fellows that killed my father and took my country from me."

"But he was only a little child, you know, when those things happened," said Grace. "He could not remember about it."

"True, my love," her cousin went on. "He was too young to remember much. The hurried flight must have seemed to him like a dream; and the beautiful city of his birth, with its vineyards and fruit-trees, could form no picture in his memory. But those who accompanied him had not forgotten, and they never wearied of telling him about his native land,

and the sad events that had driven him forth to be dependent on the kindness of a stranger. They had kept up a knowledge, too, by means of their friends, the desert tribes, of what had been going on all these years,—more than twenty, I suppose,—since they left their homes. They had learned that the conqueror had had troubles and dissensions at home; and, as the province seemed quiet, he had gradually withdrawn almost all the garrisons; that the people who had taken refuge in the hills and deserts had, by degrees, returned to their homes, undisturbed by those foreign soldiers who yet remained; that they had not forgotten their young prince, and knew that he was alive and well; that they would receive him joyfully and fight for him, if necessary, as their fathers had done for his father; and finally, that the old king had died, and that the cruel general, who had joined in a conspiracy against the new monarch, had been put to death. They heard, also, that this new king was a peaceable sovereign, caring far more to adorn and beautify his cities and to make his

country wealthy by commerce, than to fight as his father had done. All these things had been told to the young prince, and he had pondered much upon them. One day he went to the royal palace, and asked to speak with the Egyptian king, who was now growing old himself. When the young man came into the presence of his benefactor, he threw himself at his feet, and begged him that he might depart and go unto his own country. King Pharaoh was surprised and grieved; he loved the young man, and was unwilling to part with him; and, fearing lest something had occurred to displease him and make him discontented, he inquired anxiously if any thing had been left undone which could make him happier; if there was any thing more that he wished. 'What hast thou lacked with me,' he asked, tenderly, 'that thou shouldst wish to depart to thine own land?'

"The young prince felt his kindness; he remembered with grateful affection all that he owed to the good king, and at first he could scarcely answer. But his love for his own

land, his longing for the home, unseen so long, his desire to be with his own people, and, perhaps, Harry, to avenge his father's wrongs, prevailed; and he answered, with deep, loving gratitude, yet with an irresistibly earnest and pleading tone, 'Nothing; yet let me go.' The kind-hearted king, seeing how much he wished it, consented; and, as Egypt was a rich and powerful country, I have no doubt the king provided his young friend with money and arms to carry on his enterprise, and he bade him, if he were disappointed or unsuccessful, to return to him, and make his home there for the rest of his life. So the prince said good-bye to his lovely wife and his pretty boy, who were to stay with King Pharaoh while he was absent, and set off on his expedition."

"And did he succeed, Cousin Lizzie?" asked the eager Harry. "Did he drive out the enemy, and get his country back again? And did he go and get his wife and boy?"

"I am glad to be able to tell you, Harry, that he did succeed. The northern king was far too prosperous, too busy, and too peaceable

to care much at first about the out-lying province his father had subdued ; and, though there was some fighting, he offered no great opposition to the prince when he sought to reclaim his own dominions. He contented himself with retaining the harbor on the Red Sea, and exacting a tribute, which was not always paid ; and at every convenient opportunity, the people so long oppressed tried to avenge themselves by raids into their northern neighbors' country, whence they carried off cattle and sheep and any thing else they could. But the long-exiled prince — the king, we should call him now — reigned in tolerable quiet all his life, and left his power to his son, the pretty boy born in Egypt ; for he and his mother came safely to their new home as soon as things became settled there. In after times, the two nations had many struggles and battles ; sometimes one side was victorious, sometimes the other ; but, after many years, a stronger nation conquered them both, and they were blended into one province, with the same language, the same laws, and the same cus-

toms. And now, Harry, I want you and Sam and Robert and Grace to find out for yourselves who this young prince was, and who was the king that conquered his country, and see if you can tell me before another Sunday."

The boys scrambled to their feet, and Sam said, "Let's go down now, Harry, and get the big Bible, and find out;" so off they went. Susie had fallen asleep, and Grace sat quietly on her low chair, with a very thoughtful look. "Cousin Lizzie," she said at last, "you say we can always find a lesson for ourselves in these old stories; what is it here? That we should be kind and good to strangers, as the king of Egypt was?"

"That is a very good lesson, Grace dear, but it is not the one I found there. You are hardly old enough to understand me, but I will tell you what I was thinking while I read it. It was that our souls are like this young prince. We may have, in this beautiful world, friends and comforts and pleasures to make us happy, and yet there will often come a feeling which is not discontent or unhappiness, a long-

ing for something higher and better ; a sense that this world is not, after all, our real home, and a desire to seek that heavenly country where our Father has many mansions, and which is the soul's true home. You will feel this some time, Grace, when you grow older ; in the mean time, enjoy the happiness God sends you, and thank him for it."

There was a pause, and then Grace said, "Cousin Lizzie, I think I feel some as Harry does about the stories in the Old Testament. I don't like very well to read them, for it seems to me the people they tell about did a great many wrong things. I don't think they can be proper examples for us, though I have heard some persons talk as if they were. But I like much better to read the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles."

"We must always remember, my child," replied Cousin Lizzie, "when we read any stories of old times, that the people who lived then are not to be judged by exactly the same rules as we are, for they did not know so much about right and wrong. King David did many

wrong things ; but I suspect he was a much better man than most who lived when he did ; and, though we must not imitate his sins, we certainly should be as quick to repent as he was when his guilt was pointed out to him. In all such cases, so far as the persons of whom we read do right, they may be examples for us ; when they do wrong, they become warnings, that we may avoid such actions ourselves. But I quite agree with you, Grace, that the New Testament is much pleasanter and more profitable reading, especially for the young. And so long as we can read of Jesus, who is the perfect example for us all, we need not look for models elsewhere ; if we can but make our lives like his, it is all we should want."

"But we can't, dear Lizzie," exclaimed Grace, surprised. "We can't go about healing the sick, and stilling the tempests, as he did. I wish we could."

"We may not do the same things that he did, Gracie, but can we not be led by the same spirit of love ? Can we not — you and I — go

about doing good by taking every opportunity to help others? stilling the tempests of passion, perhaps, in young hearts, and helping to heal the sick, by waiting on them? Can we not do the things that please God, by performing faithfully our daily duties? Can we not love those around us, and be patient and gentle with them when they do wrong, as Jesus was? Can we not have the spirit of love and obedience to God in our hearts, so that we shall wish to do right? If we do this, we shall make our lives like his, and be children of God, as we are told to be."

Grace drew a long breath. "Oh, Cousin Lizzie, it would be *beautiful*! Do you suppose we really can?"

"I suppose our heavenly Father never told us to do any thing that is not possible, darling. And he is always ready to help us, and be with us; you know Jesus said that he did nothing of himself alone, but that God gave him the power; and he will give us all the power we need, if we ask trustfully for it, and try to do his will "


"I'll try, cousin, I'll try with all my might," said Grace. "I always liked to read about Jesus, and I have thought I should have liked to be living then; but somehow it never seemed as if the things I read had much to do with me. I am so glad I can be even a little like him. Thank you for telling me."

Just then Susie woke, and began to rub her eyes. "Is it morning?" she asked, drowsily.

"No, you sleepy little puss; but it is time you should go to mother." And Grace lifted her little sister tenderly in her arms and carried her away, thinking of what Cousin Lizzie had said.

ROSE PRESTON'S EXPERIENCE.

CHAPTER I.

“ ROSE! why will you be so wilful?” said Margaret Preston to her little sister; and as she spoke, she laid down the book she held in her hand.

Rose stood with a sullen, pouting expression on her face, and her shoulders curved forward in a very ungraceful way; but she did not speak. Finding that her sister took no further notice of her, Rose left the room, and went upstairs to her playthings; but an uneasy conscience would not suffer her to enjoy them, and she returned to the sitting-room, not to express any penitence or ask forgiveness, but with an undefined wish that Margaret would want something done that she could do for her. Margaret had gone out, however, and Rose sauntered about for some minutes, not know-

ing what to do. At last she went up-stairs again, to stay awhile with a lady who was visiting them, and whom she was accustomed to call Aunt Mary, though in truth she was but a distant relation. Aunt Mary smiled and bade her welcome, and Rose went to the window, and kneeling down beside it, rested her chin on her hands and looked out.

"What is the matter, Rose?" asked her friend. "You do not look quite so pleasant as I like to see you. Has any thing troubled you?"

"Margaret called me wilful," answered the little girl, not turning round; "but I don't think I am."

"I'm sure I hope not; it would be very hard for Margaret, with all her cares, to have a wilful child to trouble her. But are you sure you know what wilfulness is, little Rose?"

Rose turned round now. "Why, it means when you won't do what they tell you to, doesn't it?"

"Partly; that is not all the meaning. It is being unwilling to give up your own way and

your own will. Suppose you were playing, and Margaret should call you to your lessons or work, and, instead of coming pleasantly and cheerfully, you should come slowly, as if you did not like it. That would show wilfulness. Whenever you do any thing reluctantly, and with the feeling in your heart that you would not if you could help it, you are wilful. Whenever you persist in doing things that you have been desired not to do, you are wilful. It is a sad fault; I hope it is not one of yours." Rose looked serious; she began to be afraid Margaret was right to call her wilful. Aunt Mary went on. "How old are you, Rose?"

"Nine years old; very nearly ten."

"Do you remember your mother?"

"Not much; I know she used to take me in her lap and kiss me, and Margaret has a picture of her. I think sometimes, perhaps Margaret looks like her. You know I was only four years old when she died."

"Very true. Margaret does not look much like her, but she has her mother's character and disposition. But Margaret's face wears a

sad, anxious expression that your mother's never did ; and I fear you make that, Rose. It is the grief she feels when you do wrong that is carrying away the bloom and cheerfulness from your sister. If she did not love you so much, it would not grieve her so to have you naughty. But to return to what we were saying ; shall I tell you how you can find out whether or not you are wilful ? Would you really like to know ? ”

Rose hesitated. “ I should like to know that I am not,” she said. “ Yes, I *should* like to find out ; how can I ? ” and she came and sat on the carpet by Aunt Mary's side.

“ Well, dear, to-morrow morning, when you wake, resolve to watch yourself all day, and see what your feeling is when you are told to do any thing. If you feel glad and happy to do it, you will know you have an obedient spirit. If you feel unwilling or sullen, you may be sure you are wilful. Will you try it, and come and tell me the result to-morrow night ? ”

“ But, Aunt Mary, if I am at play I never

like to leave it, though I do very often when Margaret or father calls me. It isn't being wilful if I go, is it ? ”

“ Not if you go pleasantly, feeling willing to please your friends. If you are wilful and love your own way best, you will go reluctantly, half do what you are told, and be longing all the time to get away. Your dear mother, Rose, never was wilful in her life, I think : she was always ready to please others, and Margaret is like her. How kindly she will put aside her work or her book to help you in any thing you wish, or give up her own pleasures to please you, without even saying to herself that you are troublesome.”

New ideas were dawning in the little girl's mind. “ I'll try it, Aunt Mary,” she said, earnestly, “ and tell you to-morrow night. But isn't it wilful in Margaret when she insists on my doing as she says ? ”

“ No, Rose ; because she is older and wiser, and has the care of you ; and what she tells you to do is for your own good. There she comes, — this fresh breeze has put a little color in her cheeks, I am glad to see.”

Rose kissed Aunt Mary, and danced away to meet her sister, entirely forgetting her past misconduct. But Margaret had not forgotten; and when Rose came running to her with a smiling face, and begged her to come and swing, she answered gravely that she had not time, and went directly into the house. Rose caught her sun-bonnet from the peg, and went off to play, her uneasiness quite gone; and Margaret, as she laid aside her shawl, sighed to think that Rose was never sorry for doing wrong. She took her work, and went to sit with Aunt Mary, whose kindly words often cheered her when she was desponding, and so they did now; for Aunt Mary bade her be hopeful, and remember that Rose was a mere thoughtless child, and that the good seed sown now would spring up some time.

The next morning, while Rose was dressing, very leisurely, and stopping now and then to look out of the window and watch the birds, her sister called her. "Rose! can you not make haste? I want you."

"Dear me, what a fuss! I won't make

haste," she said, half aloud; and then she heard Aunt Mary's window open, and that reminded her of her resolution. "That was wilful, I suppose," she said, feeling ashamed, and went down as soon as possible.

Just as the breakfast-bell was about to ring, Margaret chanced to notice her sister, who was hanging over her father's chair, as he wrote, and chattering to him.

"Have you brushed your hair, Rose?"

"You hurried me so I forgot it," she answered, a little vexed at her own heedlessness.

"Go and do it now, then; you will have time while Susan is taking up the breakfast."

"Time to comb and smooth all these tangled curls?" asked Mr. Preston, laying his hand fondly on Rose's head.

"No, that I shall do by and by," said Margaret; "but time enough to brush them fit to appear at the table. Run along, Rose."

Rose went, but sullenly; she had no objection to doing it, but she hated being told, and it was not till she passed Aunt Mary's door that she remembered this was showing wilful-

ness. Poor Rose ! she was little aware how deeply this love of having her own way had become rooted ; but as the feeling of reluctance rose again and again in her mind, she could not but own that her sister's sad reproof had not been uncalled for. After supper, she stole softly into Aunt Mary's room, and seated herself quietly on the floor by her side.

" Well, little one, what is the result of this day's experience ? " asked Mrs. Morrison. " Was sister Margaret right or wrong ? "

" Right," answered the little girl, with a deep sigh. " I believe I am wilful ; for I did not like to do any thing, scarcely, that I was told. I kept thinking ' I don't want to ' all the time, almost. "

Aunt Mary smiled ; she had expected some such result. " Well, Rose dear, now you have discovered that you really are wilful, what are you going to do about it ? Are you going to grow up in this way, and become disagreeable to yourself and every one else, or shall you try to correct the fault ? It can be cured, you know, though it will take a long time and a great deal of resolution on your part. "

Rose sat thinking some minutes. At last she said, "But I can't help that feeling coming; can I, Aunt Mary?"

"Not now, perhaps; but you can help yielding to it. When you are told to do any thing, even if you do not wish to do it, you can go at once, and not look or act unwilling, even if you feel so. And by and by you will find that the feeling itself will not come so often. Will you try it, Rose, for the rest of this week?"

"A week? Hadn't I better try a month? I can tell better after so long."

"Try all the time, dear; but come to me at the end of the week, and let me know how successful you are."

So Rose began the trial with fine resolutions of watchfulness, and a determination to conquer her self-will; but Saturday evening found her at Aunt Mary's side again, with a confession of disappointed hopes and broken resolves. No way surprised at this, her kind friend bade her try again, and if that week's trial was not successful she would help her to find out the reason. The next attempt succeeded no bet-

ter; and when Rose had finished her story, she laid her head in Aunt Mary's lap, and fairly sobbed aloud.

"And now, Rose," said Aunt Mary, when the sobs had ceased and the tears were wiped away, "let us find the reason of your failure. You are sure you *tried*?"

"I tried some, I know I did; but I kept doing wrong so often, it seemed of no use to keep on trying."

"And how did you try, my child? Did you depend on yourself, or seek help elsewhere?"

Rose looked up surprised. "Can any one but myself make me do right? I thought I must cure myself."

"Certainly, no one else can do it for you; but I was not thinking of earthly help. Did you remember, Rose, that our heavenly Father loves to help his little ones to do right? that the Good Shepherd is always ready to seek and save the lambs that have strayed away? Did you ask for that help every morning, and confess your failures every night with sorrow, and ask to be forgiven?"

Rose shook her head. "I never thought of it, Aunt Mary. I don't half the time remember my prayers, unless Margaret reminds me. Would it help me if I did?"

"My dear Rose, you never can succeed without it. Go to your Father in heaven as you would go to me or to Margaret, for any thing you wish; tell him all your troubles and temptations; carry to him all your wants and longings; ask him to strengthen your faint desires to do right, and help you to conquer your temptations. Do not neglect this; and do not think that no time but morning and evening will do for it. When the temptation comes, then is the time to ask for help; when you are discouraged, then is the time to seek new strength and hope. You are very young, Rose, but not too young to understand me; not too young to love God and try to please him. Do you remember what we are told of Jesus, that he came to minister unto others, and that he did always the things which pleased God? I think one difficulty with you, little Rose, may be that you care too much

about pleasing yourself, and too little about pleasing others. Try to forget yourself, my child, and think only of making others happy; then you will become more like Jesus, and will conquer this hateful self-will."

Rose looked very sad. "But, Aunt Mary," she said, hesitating, "I am afraid that—that I do not love God. Will he hear those who do not love him?"

"My child, he loves you, loves you even when you are disobedient and wayward; loves and pities, and would willingly have you return and be forgiven. Trust in his love, and if you try to please him, if you do right because he desires it, you will soon begin to love him. But you must not be discouraged if you fail a great many times. Keep on trying and keep on praying."

Rose went away, serious and thoughtful, determined to try, but not very hopeful as to final success. Shortly after, Aunt Mary left them. Before she went, she took occasion to tell Margaret of her conversations with Rose; and Margaret, when she learned that the child

had a desire to improve, found it more easy to wait patiently for the signs of improvement. But there was one thing which prevented entire confidence between the sisters. Margaret was reserved in character, and did not find it easy to speak of her own feelings to any one, unless it might be her father or Aunt Mary; and, though she was always kind and patient and self-forgetful with regard to her little sister, her many cares and anxieties had given her a seriousness of countenance and manner hardly suited to her years; and this gravity Rose mistook for want of affection. Mr. Preston petted and caressed her a great deal; Margaret's caresses were rare, and Rose fell into the error, common with children, of believing that those who do not show their affection in this way have none in their hearts. So Rose feared to tell her sister her thoughts and wishes, lest they should not meet with sympathy; and Margaret, on her part, thought Rose sullen and obdurate. Now that the little girl was convinced of her fault and the power it had acquired over her, she was really anxious to

conquer it; but evil habits are hard to eradicate, and hardest of all is self-will. Rose was not selfish in the usual sense of the word; she was always ready to share her toys, her books, her pleasures of all kinds, with others; the only thing she was unwilling to give up was her own way. As she herself said, whenever she was told to do any thing, the "don't-want-to" feeling came up in her mind; not that she so much disliked the duties, but she disliked to obey. She tried, perseveringly, and sought for help, as Aunt Mary had told her; but her failures were many, and she grew disheartened. Aunt Mary was not there, to listen and console, and she was afraid to tell Margaret. And so it chanced, one day when Rose had been unusually troublesome, that Margaret, returning home from a visit to a sick neighbor, and going into the chamber that had been Aunt Mary's, found the little girl lying on the sofa there, sobbing violently.

"Why, Rose! darling little sister! What is the matter? Are you sick? Tell me all about it." And Margaret sat down beside her,

and lifted up the flushed, tearful face, looking so pitying and affectionate, that Rose felt comforted at once.

"O Margaret, I shall never, never be a good child," she sobbed, clinging to her. "I meant to be so good to-day, and please you all the time, and I have been naughtier than ever. What shall I do?"

Margaret soothed her gently. "Don't sob so, Rose; you cannot hear me if you do. Don't you know you have improved a great deal in the last six months? You are very seldom idle or wilful about your lessons and work now, and I really believe you are trying to be obedient. Do not despair if you do fail occasionally; we all do wrong sometimes, even when we are resolved to do right."

Rose started up. "All? you, Margaret? I thought you never did any thing wrong."

Margaret smiled sadly. "Oh, yes, Rose; and then I feel badly, as you do now, and am almost discouraged. But I try to remember that our Father in heaven sees all our efforts to do right, and forgives us when we are sorry

for doing wrong ; and then I take courage and try again. Suppose that we were going to our home, which was a lovely place, but on the top of a hill difficult to climb ; and suppose that when we stumbled over a stone, or caught our dresses on a bramble, we should sit down and cry, and say we never would try any more. How soon do you think we should arrive there ? ”

Rose smiled through her tears. “ Not at all, I guess. ”

“ And Rose, did you notice little Fanny Greene yesterday, when we were there ? She is only a year old, you know, and is just beginning to walk ; and did you not see how often she fell down while she was trying to cross the room ? But every time she would look up at her mother, and seeing that she smiled and held out her hand, the little thing would help herself up again, and go a few steps farther. And when at last she did go across the room without one fall, how she laughed and shouted with delight ! Now Rose, you and I are like little Fanny ; we are trying to walk in the path

of truth and obedience: obedience to God's will. And we slip and fall and hurt ourselves, and fail many times. But shall we stay weeping where we fell, and say it is of no use to try? or shall we look up, like Fanny, and see our Father still smiling on our efforts and his hand outstretched to aid us, and so take courage and go on?"

"But, Margaret," said Rose, timidly, "when I am so naughty, I do not feel as if—as if any one loved me."

"O Rose! I always love you, and so does father; and don't you know who loves us better than our friends here can? Don't you remember who lived in the world to teach us how to become children of God, and is just as ready now to help us as he was then? You cannot forget, darling, can you?"

Rose scarcely listened to the last words; she had nestled closer to her sister, and now, putting her arms around her neck, said, softly, "Do you love me, then, Margaret, really?"

"Why, you silly child," answered Margaret, with an affectionate caress; "don't I always

love you? Did I ever do any thing but love you, since you were a tiny little baby, and I used to carry you in my arms?"

"Well, I didn't really know; but I wish,— I suppose it is very silly and babyish,— but I wish you would say so sometimes, and kiss me as papa does. I should not be afraid to tell you things then."

Margaret could hardly help laughing; but she understood, too, how her quietness and gravity might have repressed the child's warm feelings, and she answered, "I don't think it is my way to kiss any one much, Rose, but if you like kisses, you shall have them; I did not know you cared about it. And will you remember little Fanny Greene, and keep on trying?"

"Yes, Margaret; and now will you come into the garden with me, and see if we can find autumn flowers enough to fill the vase? Or, if you are going to sew, may I read to you? I want to do something for you."

CHAPTER II.

MORE than three years, during which time Mrs. Morrison had resided with relatives at the West, passed away, before she again found an opportunity to visit her young friends ; and it was on a pleasant afternoon in early summer, that she arrived at Mr. Preston's house. She was joyfully received by Rose, no longer a plump, round-faced little girl of ten, but a maiden of thirteen, considerably taller and more slender, with a bright, sunny countenance that had entirely lost the sullen, pouting look formerly too common. Margaret, too, was quite as happy, though more quietly so, to welcome her dear old friend ; and Aunt Mary saw, as she looked earnestly at her, that the expression of sorrow and anxiety had fled, and only peace and happiness could be seen there. Aunt Mary had heard often from Margaret, during her absence, and had sometimes written to Rose herself, as well as to her sister ; but though Rose could

tell her thoughts to those she dearly loved, she was shy about writing, and she had seldom answered these letters.

As they were sitting on the piazza in the evening, Rose suddenly said, "O, Aunt Mary, do you know we are not going to live here any more? Father is going to South America, to be gone some years, and Margaret is to be married in the autumn."

"And you, Rose; what is to become of you?"

"We are all to live with Mrs. Meredith this winter, and in the spring Charles and Margaret are going to travel. Mrs. Meredith is to accompany them, and Florence and I are to go to school."

"And whose plan is it, sending you to school, Rose?"

"Mrs. Meredith's, I think. You know I must be somewhere, and she told papa I needed to learn things which I could not so well learn at home, and that I ought to be more among girls of my own age. I hardly think he would have consented if he had not been going away; but I suppose it is all settled."

"And do you think you shall like it?"

"Oh, I don't know; I never went to school at all, and it will seem odd enough. Aunt Louisa — she is papa's half-sister, perhaps you know — lives about a mile and a half from the Academy, or Institute, or whatever it is called, and we are to board with her. I don't know Aunt Louisa much, but it will not be exactly like being among strangers, and Florence will be with me, and she is almost like a sister. Only I shall not like to be separated from Margaret, the dearest, kindest sister that ever was. It grieves me to think how I used to trouble her."

Aunt Mary looked well pleased. "Then you never trouble her now?"

"Sometimes; but I don't mean to do it. Only I get cross once in awhile, when I can't do as I like; and so" —

"The wilfulness not quite conquered yet, Rose?"

"O, Aunt Mary! I am afraid it never will be. I have learned to give up directly and pleasantly in most things, and I love my father

and sister too much not to wish to please them; but the 'don't-want-to' feeling is not gone yet. I do hate to give up my wishes sometimes."

"There are a great many people in the like case, Rose. But we have the comfort of knowing that the more we care for others the less we shall desire to have our own way. I can only bid you keep on trying and keep on hoping; remembering that our duties and pleasures and trials are all appointed by our heavenly Father, and that he will give the strength we need, if we only ask it. You do not forget that, my child?"

Rose laid her head on Aunt Mary's lap, as she used to do in her childish years, and looked up in her face. "Not often; and I am always so sorry when I do. It makes every thing go wrong. But I must not stop to talk any more now; I must go and water my flowers."

When Aunt Mary talked with Margaret, she found that Rose had not over-estimated her improvement. Margaret spoke with great pleasure of her young sister's endeavors to do

right, her kind thoughtfulness and evident desire to please her, and of the unrestrained and ever-increasing affection between them.

But their visitor saw, also, what neither of the sisters had perceived: that Margaret's utter unselfishness, and her indulgent love for the little one so early confided to her care, had made Rose's task, while it seemed easier, in truth more difficult. No real trials had, as yet, come to this young disciple; her faith and courage had not yet been tested by any great disappointment; and when Aunt Mary noticed Margaret's care to make Rose happy in every way, and how silently and tenderly her own wishes were set aside to please her sister, she thought, with an anxious affection, that both had yet much to learn.

"I am very glad you are to go to school, Rose," she said, one day.

"Why, Aunt Mary? Do you think, as Mrs. Meredith does, that I need different training awhile?"

"Yes, Rose; both moral and intellectual training. You are in danger of becoming, if

not selfish, yet self-indulgent here. Margaret is so entirely self-forgetful, and your father so excessively fond of you, that they give you few, if any, opportunities of self-denial; and we can never become what we ought unless we learn to deny ourselves. Away from home and friends, you will be obliged to consider other people's wishes, and they will not be likely always to try to please you. While you are a guest of Mrs. Meredith, it will be your duty to conform to her ways and wishes in most things; and when you go to your Aunt Louisa, you must be careful not to increase her cares. She has a number of children, I know, some of them small ones, and you will find many opportunities to do kindnesses for her and for them. Then the discipline of school will do you good; the rules and restrictions, which you must obey, will help to curb the self-will which is so hard to conquer; and if you give way to it and disobey, why, you will find the consequences unpleasant. You cannot go to your teacher, as you do to Margaret, with tears and caresses, and ask to be

forgiven; if you transgress, you must bear the punishment."

"But, Aunt Mary, do you think telling me all this will make me wish to go?" asked Rose, laughing.

"I dare say not; but it is only right that you should know what to expect. And Rose dear, if you really wish to be cured of your faults, you should be glad of any thing that will help to do it."

"As we are glad to take any medicine, however disagreeable, when we are ill? Well, Aunt Mary, I'll do my best; I don't wish to be selfish or self-willed."

"And Rose, when any thing crosses your plans or wishes, say to yourself, 'Here is an opportunity for me to submit gladly;' you don't know how much easier the submission will be. Who is that gentleman coming here?"

"That is Charles Meredith, my brother that is to be. Come down and see him, Aunt Mary."

A few weeks after Aunt Mary's arrival,

Rose was in great glee at the prospect of a day to be spent at Mrs. Meredith's, and a sailing party in the afternoon on a beautiful pond at no great distance from the house. Margaret had been a little unwilling to accept the invitation, but her lover's entreaties, her father's desire, and Rose's evident, though unspoken, eagerness, had induced her, as usual, to resign her own preference to gratify the others. Merrily the party set off, with gay adieux to Mr. Preston and Aunt Mary. "Take good care of Rose, Charley," were Mr. Preston's last words. "I don't need to tell you to take care of Margaret." The morning passed pleasantly in rambling about the garden and grove, and in examining the pictures, of which Mrs. Meredith possessed a large number; and in the afternoon, when the rest of the party arrived, preparations were made for the sailing party. Rose and Margaret were in the same boat with Charles Meredith and several others, and a merry party they were. At last, almost wearied with pleasure, and their little vessel loaded with the fragrant

white lilies with which the pond abounded, they turned towards the shore, whither most of their companions had preceded them. How it happened, no one ever knew ; whether from a sudden gust of wind, some carelessness of those in the boat, or some obstruction unseen below the water ; but only a little more than half the distance had been accomplished, when the boat was suddenly overturned. Charles, who had been by the side of Rose, glanced round for Margaret, and saw her clinging to the boat. "Save Rose ; I can hold on," she said, hastily. But the accident had been immediately observed from the shore, and the other boats at once put off to their assistance, so that a minute or two sufficed to place Rose in safety, and Charles, who was an excellent swimmer, turned back for his beloved Margaret. She was no longer to be seen, and for some time he looked and asked in vain. In the mean time the boat in which Rose and some others had been placed had already returned to the shore, and its dripping occupants were urged to hasten to the house. But Rose

refused to move from the place until she saw her sister safe on shore.

"I see her now ; Charles has just lifted her into the other boat," said Florence Meredith. "Come home, Rose ;" and as the boat touched the landing, and "All safe!" was shouted, she turned and accompanied Florence to the house. Wet and chilled, she was glad to go at once to her young friend's own apartment, and change her clothes ; and not till this was done, and Florence, who had been down to make inquiries, returned, did she learn that two of the party had been drawn from the water insensible, and were not yet restored to consciousness. Forgetting the dripping ringlets, from which she had been wringing the water, she was hurrying down stairs, when Florence stopped her. "No, Rose, you must not go ; you can do no good ; the doctor is there and mother, and " —

"But tell me then, Florence, who are they?"

"James Foster — he could not swim, you know, and " —

“Not Margaret?”

Florence's tears were the only answer, and Rose, pushing away the hand that would have held her, made her way among the crowd of frightened servants and guests, to the room where she found her sister had been carried. Mrs. Meredith at once came to meet her. “Rose, my child,” she said, “you must go back to Florence. There is nothing you can do here, and we hope your sister will be better soon.”

“Let me see her,” she answered, impatiently; and hurried to the bedside. Was that Margaret? so pale and still and cold? She stood gazing at her, bewildered, and when Mrs. Meredith took her hand to lead her away, she no longer made any opposition. Florence hung over her, caressing and soothing, and trying to comfort her, all in vain; she sat silent by the window, gazing upon the bright waters, whose treacherous beauty had perhaps proved fatal, and giving no heed to any thing. At length, after Florence, wearied with grief and apprehension, had ceased to say any thing,

and seemed to have sunk into a light slumber, Rose saw Charles Meredith mount a horse and ride hastily away. She watched him till she was sure of the road he took, and then softly left the room, and clinging with a dizzy feeling to the railing of the staircase, went slowly down again. She had reached a landing-place, half way down, when a door opened below.

"I am afraid nothing more can be done," she heard the physician say; "after so many hours' vain effort, I see no hope of life."

Rose glanced up at the staircase window; the sun was setting with unusual brilliancy, and in the utter stillness which now reigned within and without the house, the songs of the birds and the rustling of the leaves fell upon her ear with painful distinctness. Again she bent over to listen.

"Mr. Preston has been sent for, you say?"

"Yes, — Charles went himself as soon as it became evident" — Mrs. Meredith paused.

"It will be a great shock to him, — a great loss," said the physician.

"To him — to us all. She and Charles

were to have been married soon. My darling Margaret!"

Rose heard no more — knew no more ; when, some time after, startled by a cry of alarm from Florence, Mrs. Meredith went up-stairs, she found the poor child lying unconscious upon the landing-place. A sad ending to a bright day ; for poor Rose, a sudden waking to the realities of an existence which had been until now all sunshine.

When Rose again opened her eyes with recovered consciousness, she was at home. Not in her own room, the one she and Margaret had shared for ten years ; but in Aunt Mary's room ; and Aunt Mary herself sat by the window. Rose felt weak and tired ; but she watched, with a languid, varying interest, all that went on around her. It was nearly dark ; but the clouds in the west were just tinged with the last fading light of the sun, which itself had sometime before disappeared. Presently Aunt Mary rose, drew down the curtains and lighted a lamp, taking care to place it so that no rays fell upon the bed ; and then a voice, not Aunt Mary's, spoke.

“You think Dr. Arnold is right, then, Mary ; and my poor little Rose is likely to recover ? Thank God, I have not lost all.”

It was her father's voice, but she did not comprehend his meaning. She could not see him where he sat, but she presently heard him turn the leaves of a book, and then he began to read from the Psalms. Rose was far too weak and languid to pay attention to the reading, but she heard the words, and occasionally an idea of their meaning crossed her mind. She did not notice when the Psalm was ended and the prayer begun, but suddenly one phrase fixed her interest and she listened attentively. Her father was giving thanks for the mercy that had been mingled with trial, that the life of this, his only remaining child, had been granted to their prayers ; that while they must mourn for the bereavement that had fallen upon them, they could still rejoice in the blessings left, and trust the love of a Father who doeth all things well. Rose heard no more ; she lay pondering these words and half consciously trying to recall what had happened. She put

her hand to her head, as if to assist her recollection. Another change; her curls were gone; the long glossy ringlets, Margaret's care and her father's pride, which he never would allow to be cut short, because they were like her mother's, had all been shorn away; and only the soft rings of hair clustered about her forehead, as when she had been a tiny child in her mother's arms.

The prayer was finished: her father had come to the bedside, kissed her pale cheek with a murmured blessing, and left the room; but Rose lay still with closed eyes, trying to understand what had happened. By degrees, it came to her recollection; the ride, the bright morning, the lovely lake with its blue waves, the sail, the accident, all returned to her remembrance, and she knew that Margaret was no longer living. But in her state of weakness, the knowledge did not come with a shock; she recognized it, as she had recognized what went on around her, simply and consciously, but with very little thought or feeling; and wearied even by the exertion she

had made, she fell into a quiet slumber, from which she did not wake till the morning light filled the room.

That night's quiet, tranquil rest brought healing with it, her mind was clearer, her bodily strength greater; and when Aunt Mary came to the bedside and marked the happy change, tears of joy came to her eyes. Rose put up her arms, to draw the kind face nearer hers. "Aunt Mary," she said, softly, "I want to ask you something. Where is Margaret?" The question was not entirely unexpected, but how to answer it? Would not the shock of hearing the sad truth be sufficient to throw the invalid back into that state of weakness, both bodily and mentally, from which she was just beginning to recover? Rose saw the hesitation and guessed its cause. "I know," she added, hastily; "I remember what happened. I only meant, could I see her once more, or is it too late?"

"Too late, darling," answered Aunt Mary, gently; "all that is left to us now of Margaret is the dear remembrance."

Rose sighed. "Have I been sick, Aunt Mary ; very sick ?"

"Yes, dear."

"And how long, — how long is it since that day ?"

"Nearly three weeks ; but don't ask any more now, my child. Let me bathe your face and hands, and bring you something to eat, and then your father will come and see you. He will rejoice to find you so much better."

"Ah yes ;" and Rose fell into a reverie, recalling the prayer of the night before, and thinking that now she and her father must be all to each other. The breakfast was taken with sufficient relish to satisfy her kind nurse, and when Mr. Preston came in, he was delighted to see the great improvement which twenty-four hours had brought. But he was thoughtful of her weakness, and did not stay long, but left her to Aunt Mary's gentle care. From this time, Rose rapidly gained in health and strength, and a few weeks saw her able to go down stairs again with the family, to ride and even to walk out. But Aunt Mary noticed

that though the color returned to her cheek and strength to her limbs, there was a listlessness about her not entirely accounted for by her illness, a want of interest in the things around her. She no longer cared for her books or flowers or her living pets; employment of any kind seemed to be an annoyance; she turned wearily away from all, and spent much of her time in dreamy reverie. With great patience, Aunt Mary waited for this state of feeling to expend itself: but seeing no improvement, she took upon herself the duty of speaking to Rose; for Mr. Preston, always an indulgent father, was now more than ever so. August was now far advanced; a sultry day had been followed by heavy showers, which left every thing bright and fresh; and Rose was sitting by the window, watching a brilliant rainbow.

“Rose, my child?” She half turned. “Yes, Aunt Mary.” The answer was in the same weary, indifferent tone that had characterized her since her illness.

“Rose dear, do you remember telling me of your father’s plans for this autumn?”

She was roused to a little interest. "Of his going to Chili? Yes; but he will not go now, I suppose?"

"Yes, my love; he has asked me to tell you and to consult with you. His business makes his going necessary, and he has not altered his plans, except that Charles Meredith is to accompany him."

"And I, Aunt Mary? I cannot live here alone."

"Certainly not; but as your father expects to be gone for some time, he thinks it best to sell this pretty place. He wishes to make such arrangements for you as will please you best. Mrs. Meredith has offered you a home with her and Florence till next spring."

"Oh no, Aunt Mary! I could not live there!" and Rose shuddered at the remembrance of the last day spent there.

"There are two other alternatives, Rose. I shall remain here with you until your father leaves in October, and then you can accompany me to the city and remain through the winter; or you can go to your Aunt Louisa at once."

"I would rather be with you, dear Aunt Mary; I should be so lonely among strangers, and Aunt Louisa is like a stranger, for I have not seen her since I was seven or eight years old." She had left her seat by the window, and was now by Aunt Mary's side, in her favorite place.

"Then it shall be so, Rose; and we will tell your father it is decided. And now I want to speak of something else. Our Father has preserved your life, and restored your health and strength; is it not time to interest yourself in your duties and pleasures again? I do not love to have my child go on in this way," she added tenderly, drawing her closer to her.

"But, Aunt Mary, how can I care as I used to do?" and the tears fell fast on the hand that clasped hers. "How can I bear to live without my sister,—my Margaret? You know she was more than a sister,—she had been all the mother I knew. Oh, I cannot, cannot bear it."

"Poor child!" said Aunt Mary, gently. "It is indeed a hard trial for you; and yet it

is one we must all bear. I know well how difficult it is to submit our will to that of God in such afflictions ; for, Rose, I had once a kind husband and three dear children ; and in one short year they were all taken from me."

Rose looked up wistfully. "How could you bear it and live ?" she asked.

"I thought at first I could not, and hoped to die ; but I found life was to be my portion. I was despondent and careless of every thing for a long time, and one day, went out to despatch some business that could no longer be delayed, feeling as though there was nothing in the world but sorrow and trouble. As I walked slowly on, I met a young girl, a perfect stranger to me, who looked at me as we passed each other with a frank, bright smile that was like a ray of sunlight breaking through the gloom that surrounded me. There is one happy heart, at least, I thought, and then I felt ashamed of my despondency. If I cannot be happy myself, I can certainly try to make others so, I said ; and the wealth

that has seemed so worthless to me may be employed in doing good. I went on with a lighter, firmer step, came home with renewed hope; and devoting myself to comforting others, found comfort myself. I never saw that young girl again, but that smile has always lingered in my memory. Twenty-five years have passed since my great sorrow came to me; and, Rose, they have not been unhappy years. You are very young, and God will send you content and happiness in good time. Just now, try to live for others,—comfort your father. If you have lost a fond sister, he has lost a devoted daughter; and though he will not blame you, even in his heart, I know it saddens him to see you so dull and despondent. For his sake, Rose, try to be cheerful; make him as happy as you can while he remains with you, and let him carry with him the consolation of knowing that you are trying to be content. You are all he has left now, my child; be to him all that a daughter can.”

Rose wiped away her tears. “Aunt Mary, I have been selfish in my sorrow; I see it

now. I will try to interest myself in what I ought, and to be cheerful ; but you must help me."

When Mr. Preston came home that night, Rose was at the gate to welcome him with a smile and kiss. His grave look brightened at sight of her, and as they walked together towards the house, they fell unconsciously into the old habit of chatting about the events of the day. At first it was an effort for Rose to resume her former pursuits, but each day made it easier ; and when her father parted from her and left her with Aunt Mary, he could rejoice to see that the light had come back to her eyes and to her heart. The change of scene helped her also by turning her thoughts into other channels ; and as she saw in her walks with Aunt Mary, something of the suffering that is in the world, she learned to be more grateful for the blessings of her own lot. Mrs. Morrison perceived also, that although Rose seldom talked much about her sister, her thoughts were often busy with the past, that she loved Margaret more and under-

stood her better than ever she had done ; and that Margaret's example and counsel, which had sometimes seemed to make no impression, had now become a deep and abiding influence, leading the young girl to try to become what that dear sister would have wished. "So being dead, she yet speaketh," thought Aunt Mary ; "and the good she might have failed to do in her life, may be better accomplished by her death." So the winter passed ; and when spring came, and Rose accompanied Florence to the town which was to be their home for the next three years, it was with a bright smile and cheerful anticipations that she took leave of her dear Aunt Mary.

Gladly welcomed by her relatives, and delighted to find in her Aunt Louisa a strong resemblance in person and character to her father, she soon felt at home there, and found, as Aunt Mary had told her, many opportunities for kind offices. Her aunt's children, except one son, were all younger than herself ; and although she had never been used to the society of boys, the good-humor and pleasant

manners of her cousins won her regard, while for the little twins, girls of four years old, she soon felt a fondness fully returned by them. School proved pleasant, too, though her entire ignorance of school ways and rules often made her companions smile; and the indulgence with which she had been treated at home sometimes led her to express her opinions with a frank simplicity which astonished her schoolmates and amused her teacher. Fond of study, and well taught by Margaret, she soon took a high place in her class, and with Florence, who was somewhat older than herself, for her constant companion, she was in little danger of passing the bounds of propriety in her love of frolic. Her gayety of disposition and willingness to please made her a favorite with her companions, while her eager interest in her studies and her ready compliance with the rules, won the approbation of Mr. Sanford, the teacher.

Only once was Rose wilfully disobedient, and it happened in this way. It was in October, the weather was delightful, and the

boys, her cousins, had been planning to go after chestnuts, and take her and Florence with them. To the girls, neither of whom had ever been on such an expedition, the prospect was very pleasant; and Rose's head was so full of it, that, on the appointed day her lessons were by no means so perfect as usual. Mr. Sanford looked grave at the repeated failures, and finally recalled her, as the class were going to their seats, to say, "You will remain after school, Miss Preston, and perform those examples again." — "But they are so difficult," remonstrated Rose, "and so long." — "You can do them correctly, if you give your mind to it," he answered. — "An hour's work, and perhaps more," thought Rose, the rebellious feeling strong just then. "I don't believe I'll stay to do them." And she did not. When the school was dismissed, she left her seat with the others, and running after Florence, who had heard Mr. Sanford's direction and had not thought of her disobeying it, declared her intention of going home immediately.

"O Rose, I wouldn't! Mr. Sanford will be very much displeased. I will go home and ask the boys to wait till you come."

"But those long questions! They may take me all the afternoon. No, I'll go home now, and go nutting; and to-morrow may take care of itself."

Florence looked very grave. "But you don't know, Rose. It would be a direct disobedience, and no teacher would excuse that. I will go back and wait for you."

"No, indeed, I shall not go back," replied Rose; and as her companion saw it was useless to urge her further, she said no more. It was a silent walk, for Rose was somewhat uneasy in her conscience, and Florence was vexed that Rose should do so, and apprehensive about the results. Dinner was awaiting them, and when it was over, the boys began to prepare the big wagon, to take them all. The little twins, Annie and Minnie, were dancing about in glee, and Johnny, the next older child, fancied he was helping his brothers by being continually in their way. Rose stood

and watched the preparations in thoughtful silence.

"Won't we have a jolly time, Rosebud?" said George, the cousin nearest her own age, but a year or two younger.

"I'm not going," she answered, with a sudden resolve.

"Not going? why, of all odd things! Why not?"

"Because I did not have my lesson perfect this morning, and I ought to have stayed to do it again. Mr. Sanford told me I must."

"Well, never mind: just tell him to-morrow morning that you forgot it," said George; "and he'll excuse you."

"But I didn't forget it, George," she answered, in a lower tone.

"My stars! wouldn't my teacher give me a thrashing or something else if I had done so? But I say, Rose, seeing you'll have to take it to-morrow, better make the best of it now, and go with us and have a good time. I wouldn't get punished for nothing."

Rose laughed. "I don't expect a thrashing

or any thing of that kind, George," she said. "I don't even know whether Mr. Sanford ever punishes his scholars, except with words. But I did wrong to come away, and I'm going back to the school to learn the lesson. You can pick the nuts as well without me."

"Not half so well; I say, mother, Rose won't go. Can't you make her?"

"Not go?" said Aunt Louisa, surprised. "Why not, my dear?"

"Only because I neglected something at school, and I must go back to do it. I really must, Aunt Louisa. Ask Florence."

Florence nodded acquiescence, sorry not to have Rose's company, but confident that she would be happier to do what she thought right. So Rose took her solitary way to the village, obtained the key of the schoolhouse, and set herself deliberately at work. At first, thoughts of the ramble in the woods and the nut-gathering would interfere, and she almost wished she had gone with the others; but she resolutely applied her mind to her work, and after rather more than an hour had the satis-

faction of seeing the problems correctly solved. Then she copied them neatly and carefully, and as she set down the last figure, a shadow fell on her book, and looking up she saw Mr. Sanford.

"Miss Preston?" he said, in some surprise.

Rose blushed crimson, but did not hesitate. "I did very wrong, Mr. Sanford," she said, "to go home when you told me to stay. I am sorry; it shall not happen again. The questions are all done now," she added, "and I think they are right."

Her teacher sat down on the opposite desk. "And what induced you to disregard my request?" he asked.

"Because they were going nutting this afternoon, and I did want to go so much. I never did go. There were no chestnut-trees where I used to live."

"You should have told me, then, and asked to be excused for to-day."

"But I never thought of it!" she exclaimed, with so much surprise, that Mr. San

ford laughed. "I believe I am an igno-
mus about school affairs, as Florence tells
me."

"You thought, I suppose, that school rules
were like the laws of the Medes and Persians,
unchangeable. But why are you here, instead
of under the chestnut-trees? Did a trouble-
some conscience prevent your going, or was it
the fear of impending punishment?"

"I didn't care for the punishment. I
mean," she continued, lifting her eyes frankly
to his, "that I would be willing to bear it,
because I really am sorry, and should like to
show you that I am. But I came back to
do the lesson, because it seemed the only right
thing to do."

Mr. Sanford held out his hand for the
paper. "You have conquered the difficulty,
I see," he said, "and yourself, too, which is
the greater conquest. I am very glad."

"And now I can go home. I am glad I
met you here," she added, "because it is much
easier and pleasanter to tell you I am sorry
here, than it would be to do it to-morrow,

when the other girls would hear me. I shouldn't have liked that."

"But suppose I should ask you to do it," said her teacher, willing to try her penitence a little farther.

"If you think I ought. Shall I? It is only what I supposed I should have to do."

"Why, as no one but ourselves and Miss Meredith knew of the offence, I don't see that we need to take the school into our confidence. You have punished yourself sufficiently, and I am not at all afraid of your disobeying again. And, Rose, I think perhaps we may be better acquainted for this little mishap. Now get your hat, and I will walk home with you; I am going directly by Mr. Lindsay's place."

Rose's walk home was pleasanter than the one to the schoolhouse; for her conscience was at ease, and she found Mr. Sanford an interesting and agreeable companion. As he was about taking leave of her at the gate, he seemed suddenly to remember something. "And, Miss Preston, I had a letter this morn-

ing, from a relative of mine, who is also a friend of yours, and who is coming soon to pass a few weeks in town. I have a little note here for you." And as Rose looked up wonderingly, he said, smiling, "Mrs. Morrison."

"Dear Aunt Mary! how glad I am!" was her joyful exclamation, as she took the note.

"Yes, she is every one's dear Aunt Mary; she is truly one of those who go about doing good." And then they began to talk of Aunt Mary, and became so interested that when the chestnutting party returned, they found Mr. Sanford still leaning on the gate, talking, and Rose eagerly listening. "Did you gather all the nuts there were, George?" asked Mr. Sanford, turning to greet the ladies, and then taking the little girls from the wagon.

"Oh no! we are going again as soon as there has been another frost, to open the burs more. We could not find many to-day. We'll take you and Rose next time. Will you go?"

"With the greatest pleasure, if nothing prevents me. No, thank you," to Mrs. Lindsay, who had asked him to come in and take tea;

"I have lingered here now longer than I should. Good-day."

Very much did Rose enjoy seeing the dear friend from whom she had parted more than six months before, and telling her all her joys and sorrows, her struggles and victories; and as Mrs. Lindsay, who knew Aunt Mary, invited her to pass some days with them, there was plenty of opportunity for conversation.

"I am glad you enjoy your school so much, Rose," said Mrs. Morrison one day; "and how do you get along with the discipline?"

"Why, it was a little odd at first, and I didn't always remember; but one easily falls into the ways of those about them, you know; and then I like Mr. Sanford so much, that I should not wish to displease him. It is a great deal easier to obey those who have the care of us, when we love them; don't you think so?"

"Yes," answered Aunt Mary; and after a pause she continued, "I think, Rose, I will tell you something that happened to me when I was about your age. I remember all the

circumstances perfectly, for it was a kind of era in my life ; and though you may not need the lesson just now, the time may come when it will do you good to recall it."

"Oh do, Aunt Mary! I like stories that begin 'When I was young.' And here comes Florence ; she may listen too, I suppose?"

"If she wishes ; but I do not promise you an interesting story. When I was young, then, Rose, I was inclined to be stubborn and self-willed ; and as I was an only child and my father was dead, I received more indulgence than was good for me. In one thing, however, my mother was judicious ; she sent me regularly to school and made me learn my lessons perfectly ; and if my disobedience or wilfulness brought me into any trouble, as was not seldom the case, I never met with any compassion from her. Her only reply would be, 'If you had chosen to behave yourself properly, there would have been no difficulty.' At the time of which I am speaking, I was attending the village academy, then taught by a widow lady, a Mrs. Lewis. She was an

excellent teacher, and very strict in discipline ; and, like most unruly children, I disliked a strict teacher. The school was often large enough to require the services of an assistant, who attended to part of the recitations, but had little to do with the government of the school. The assistant's place had been vacant for some time, when one morning, a young lady entered with Mrs. Lewis, and was introduced to us as our teacher, Miss Vincent. She was pleasing in manner and appearance, and I soon took for her one of those violent fancies which young girls are apt to take. I brought her the choicest flowers I could find in garden or wood, I tried to please her as much as possible, and even to anticipate her wishes ; her slightest word was law to me ; I was submissive to a look ; and if she smiled and thanked me, or praised my attention and docility, I was perfectly happy. My school life was pleasanter than it had been for a long time ; but even while I was so obedient to Miss Vincent, Mrs. Lewis found me as intractable as ever.

“One afternoon, I had been detained for some misdemeanor, and had received a severe reproof from the Principal; and I was putting on my bonnet and cape in the anteroom, when I heard voices close by. I wiped away the resentful tears that had come to my eyes, and listened. ‘What a trial Mary is!’ Mrs. Lewis said; ‘I wish I knew what was best to do with her.’—‘Mary? not Mary Preston?’ said Miss Vincent, I thought rather anxiously.—‘Yes, Mary Preston; she is the most troublesome pupil I have,’ answered Mrs. Lewis. ‘A day seldom passes without her transgressing in some way.’—‘But I thought Mary a very good girl,’ said Miss Vincent. ‘Her lessons are always perfect, and her conduct has always been good while she has been with me.’—‘I have no complaint to make of her lessons, in general,’ was the reply. ‘And I dare say she may behave well with you; she can if she chooses. But I find her very disobedient and refractory. I shall be obliged to see her mother, unless there is an improvement soon.’ There was a pause, and then Miss

Vincent said, 'But I am very sorry to hear this. Mary seems to have a kind heart and an affectionate disposition, and I had become quite attached to her.' I did not wait for more, but slipping out softly, I ran home as fast as possible. Our cottage door was locked, but a child from the next house came running with the key, and told me my mother had gone to see a sick friend, and would not be at home for an hour or more. I was glad, for I wanted to be alone; and hastily entering the house, I locked the door after me, and throwing myself on the floor, gave vent to my passionate resentment in tears and sobs. Irritated at first by the reproof, I was more so by Miss Vincent's hearing of my misconduct, and I accused Mrs. Lewis of hating me, of trying to make Miss Vincent dislike me, and other things as unreasonable. My violence had worn itself out before my mother came home, and she was too pre-occupied to notice my red eyes, or want of appetite, or to be surprised at my haste to go to bed.

"Next morning, I dreaded going to school,

lest my idol should treat me coldly ; but her smile and greeting were as kind as ever, and I tried to believe that what Mrs. Lewis had said would make no difference. At recess, Miss Vincent came to me and said, ' Mary, you have been wishing to show me your favorite walk ; I think I can go to-morrow, if the weather should be pleasant.' I was delighted, of course, and as the day proved fair, I was ready at the appointed time. Our way led through a lane, or rather a disused road, with bushes and flowering shrubs on each side of it, and taller trees a little farther back, some of which overshadowed the grassy path. Wild flowers were abundant, and a few raspberries were ripe enough to pick. Then we entered an enclosure covered with young birches, and passing through this, came out upon a more open space, dotted over with a few oaks and groups of tall walnut-trees, whose deep green made a pleasing contrast with the brighter shade of the grass ; and a tiny brooklet, usually dry in the hottest part of summer, went trickling softly among the

moss and stones. We sat down under one of the nut-trees, and I began to pick up and toss about a few of the last year's nuts, which lay scattered around. 'It is a pretty place, Mary,' said Miss Vincent. 'I don't wonder you love to come here.' And then we talked of the birds and flowers and trees; for Miss Vincent, although — perhaps *because* — she had always lived in the city, dearly loved all country things. 'And now, Mary,' she said at length, 'I have something to say to you, and I would rather say it here than anywhere else. May I?' I guessed she referred to Mrs. Lewis's complaints of me; but I was willing to listen to any thing from her, and said so. (How well I remember every little detail, Rose!) She went on. 'I was grieved to hear it said a little while ago that you were sometimes not so well behaved as I thought you, — sometimes unwilling to obey. Are you disobedient and self-willed, Mary?' — 'Can't you tell?' I answered evasively. 'You see a good deal of me.' — 'I can only judge of your conduct while with me,' she said, 'and that

has always been good. But how is it with Mrs. Lewis? Do you give her as much satisfaction?' I looked down, and murmured that it was not so easy to behave well with Mrs. Lewis, she was so cross.—'But why do you always obey me, Mary?' she asked.—'Because you are my teacher, and because I love you dearly,' I replied. 'The first reason is the best,' she said. 'But is not Mrs. Lewis your teacher, too; and ought you not to obey her as much or more?' This was true, and I could only repeat that I couldn't bear Mrs. Lewis. 'Mary,' said Miss Vincent, gently, 'I love you, and I think you love me; but I am afraid that your submission to me is not real obedience, but self-will in disguise. I fear you are obedient, not because it is right and proper, but because it pleases yourself, and that if I should ask you to do any thing disagreeable, you would not be willing to do it.'—'But I shouldn't find any thing disagreeable that you asked me to do,' I said, positively. — 'Not if I asked you to try to please Mrs. Lewis in every thing?' she said, smiling.

‘Ah, Mary, you cannot say you are willing to do that.’—‘But people say that the obedience that comes from love is the only kind worth having,’ I pleaded.—‘I suppose that depends on the kind of love,’ she replied. ‘If it is a love of right, of truth, of God, that is certainly the truest obedience; but the obedience that comes from a conscientious feeling of duty, even without love, is far better than that which is founded only on a real or fancied affection for a friend; for the last might lead you into error or sin. Mary dear, you are old enough to lay aside childish follies and think seriously about these things. Every year—every month is moulding your character. I want that character to be such as we can love and respect. Will you not promise me to think over your conduct when you go home, and if you are convinced it has not been correct, to reform it?’ She bent down and kissed me, and I could only whisper a yes through my tears. I kept my word. That evening I recalled my feelings and conduct for months past, and

tried to view them as another person would, — to look at them with the eye of an unprejudiced observer; and I was convicted. I saw only selfishness, obstinacy, and passion; and while I blushed at my own follies, I resolved to forsake them. I determined that my conduct should show, not only to Miss Vincent, but to Mrs. Lewis (whose real goodness and kindness I perceived when I chose to see it), that I was truly repentant; and the strong will that had made me refractory now helped me to conquer myself. Miss Vincent's affection and advice aided me, and when she left us to be married, two years after, my name stood first on the list for good conduct as well as attention to study."

Aunt Mary's story had been several times interrupted by questions; but when she ended, Rose asked, eagerly, "Is she alive now — your Miss Vincent?"

"No, my dear. She died long ago, and left but one child, a daughter, who, when she grew up, happened to marry a relative of my own, named William Preston."

Rose started up. "Aunt Mary! My father?"

"Yes, Rose; and now you know why I always have loved your mother and her children so much. But what I wanted to impress upon you is that love of an earthly friend, however good and kind, is not so sure a guide and support as love of truth and right. The former may lead you astray, — the latter will not be likely to do it. You and Florence have reached the age when these passionate attachments are most apt to arise, and I would have you be careful that what you love in your friends is true goodness, and be guided by them only so far as they guide you right."

"I know something about that," said Florence, "for I have a cousin older than myself, whom I loved, some years ago, just in that way. She was a pretty girl and full of mischief; I would do any thing she wanted me to do, and I think she liked to see what she could make me do; and we brought ourselves into one or two pretty serious scrapes. Her mother talked to her, I suppose; I know mine

did to me, and punished me severely, too ; and they said we should not be together again till we could behave as we ought. I am afraid Augusta is just about as wild, now ; but I have outgrown her influence."

"Or learned to take conscience and the Saviour's words for guides," added Aunt Mary. "I hope Rose will profit by our experience."

Rose, impulsive as ever, threw her arms around Aunt Mary, and kissed her repeatedly, wishing she could always have such a friend with her "to keep her straight;" and Florence laughingly confessed that was a thing entirely beyond her power, "if Rose chose to go crooked."



CHAPTER III.

WEEKS and months glided swiftly away, brightened and cheered by frequent correspondence with her father and Aunt Mary ; and the third spring after Mr. Pres-

ton's departure arrived. Florence had spent the vacations at her home or among her relatives ; but Rose, though often invited to accompany her, had preferred to remain with her aunt, learning the mysteries of house-keeping, and preparing, as she said, to keep house for papa, when he returned. One bright May morning, Florence, who was sitting by the window of their room, called softly to her.

"Rose! a gentleman is coming in at the gate; tall and dark, with a beard, too. Who is it?"

Rose sprang to the window. "Why, Florry! it is your brother Charles! can it be that papa has come? Run down and see him, quickly."

Florence needed no bidding; she was at the door before he reached it, laughing at her own stupidity in not immediately recognizing him. After a somewhat long interchange of question and answer, Florence bethought herself of her impatient companion up-stairs, and went to call her.

"Has he come?" was her eager inquiry.

"No, Rose; but Charles has a letter for you. Come down and see him."

Down she ran, therefore, her eyes sparkling and her cheeks flushed with expectation, and hurried with extended hand to meet Charles, who had risen as she entered. "But how you have altered, Rose!—Miss Preston," he said, not sure whether the familiar appellation given to the merry child was quite suitable for the lovely girl of seventeen who stood before him.

"Oh, don't call me Miss Preston," she said, hastily. "Why should you, when we have always known each other? and we were to have been brother and sister, you know," she added, her voice tremulous with the remembrance of the dear, lost sister. "And papa is not coming home just yet?" she asked, after a few minutes of desultory conversation.

"Not quite yet; but your letter will tell you of his plans and his reasons," he answered; and she soon left him and his sister

together, to go and read her letter. When Florence returned to the room, she found her crying.

"Rose dear! What is it? Because your father is not coming yet?"

Rose raised her head. "Not coming for ever so long, Florence; for a year, at least, and perhaps more. I am so disappointed. And it seems Charles is not to go back, but to stay with you. It makes me homesick; I did so want to see papa!"

Florence was a good comforter; she gave all the pity and sympathy wanted, and then drew Rose's attention to the pleasanter side of things, till at last smiles came back, and Rose professed herself ashamed of giving way so. "A great girl like me, to cry like a baby! I couldn't help it, though, just at first. And now we'll talk of something else."

But though Rose kept up a cheerful manner, and would not be sad, she was sorely tried by the overthrow of her hopes and expectations. She wrote to Aunt Mary, "I suppose it must be right; father certainly

thinks it is, or he would not stay; and Charles says it would be a great loss to him to leave just now. But I was very, very much disappointed. I have always looked forward to his returning this summer, and to a home with him, where you could come, as you used to do; and I cannot help fearing something may occur to prevent our ever meeting again. You will tell me that God knows best, and I cannot doubt it; but I am a silly child yet, and have not quite ceased to want my own way. Charles says papa has been very fortunate in business, and will come home a wealthy man. Dear Aunt Mary, is not our love for each other of more value than the money? Why need he stay for that? I do not care for wealth; we were very happy in our old home, where we had but one servant, and Margaret and I were obliged to do some part of the work ourselves. Aunt Lou, with her six children, and the farm housework, never has but one, and she is always happy. I am not sure that I should enjoy a palace, and troops of servants; I think

I would rather help Aunt Lou to make puddings and pies. I have had another letter since Charles came home. Papa wishes me to go next winter to Mrs. Meredith, who has kindly asked me, and remain with her till his return. If she lived in her former home, I should feel as if I could not go; but she sold that place sometime since, and has taken a house quite near the city. So Florence and I are to become accomplished, and to go into society, and there is talk of our travelling next year. Oh dear! I suppose it must be; but I suspect my vocation is more for the useful than the ornamental."

However, when winter came, she left her kind aunt and uncle with much regret on both sides, and went to reside with Mrs. Meredith; and here she acquired the grace of manner and the accomplishments which a prolonged residence at the farm would not have been likely to give her. Mrs. Meredith, who knew Mr. Preston's intentions and wishes, and who was much attached to Rose, spared no pains to make her all that a father could

wish; and her own affection for her father prompted her to learn all he desired. So, when Mr. Preston at last returned, with wealth, certainly, but with somewhat impaired health, he found Rose ready to take charge of his house; and being no longer in business, and possessing a temper and disposition most attracted by domestic pleasures, he gave himself up to the happiness of home. Rose was equally pleased; they enjoyed each other's society, and for a time cared to see no one except their friends, the Merediths; and Rose often said that the only thing wanting to complete her happiness was the presence of dear Aunt Mary.

On the afternoon of a lovely autumn day, when the sun was near its setting, a carriage drove to the door of a pleasantly situated house in one of our suburban towns, and from it alighted an elderly lady, with hair of silvery whiteness, but whose bright eyes and firm step showed that the infirmities of age had not yet laid hold upon her. Almost before she had reached the door, she was clasped in the arms

of a young lady, whose sweet, sunny countenance beamed with pleasure, as she said "My dear, dear Aunt Mary! Welcome to our home!"—"And a very beautiful home it is, Rose, if one may judge from the outside," said Mrs. Morrison, returning the embrace and kiss. "I am very glad to come to you again." The coach was dismissed, the trunks carried in, and Rose eagerly led the way to a pleasant room, furnished with every comfort.

"We kept the south-west room on purpose for you, Aunt Mary," she said, "and father let me furnish it exactly as I pleased. I hope you will like it well enough to stay ever so long."

Aunt Mary looked around at the pretty, comfortable furniture, the lovely pictures on the wall, the vase of bright autumn flowers on its little stand, and then turned to the window to see the beautiful landscape before her. "I certainly ought to be satisfied, Rose," she answered, "with so much beauty within and without. It already seems like home."

"I am very glad to hear you say so ; and you will come down when you are rested ? The library is directly under this room ; and our family sitting-room adjoins it. You will find us in one or the other. It is quite time for father to be at home." And with another fond embrace, she tripped gayly away, "to look after her household."

Mrs. Morrison had had a rather long journey, and was weary enough to lie down for some time on the comfortable couch ; and when she went down again the rooms were lighted, and she heard cheerful voices. As she reached the open door of the sitting-room, she saw Mr. Preston reclining in an easy-chair, and Rose bending over him caressingly, her hand clasped in his, and her chestnut curls touching his hair, already streaked with gray. "So I must, must I, my blossom ?" he was saying. "Then there's no more to be said on the subject. I put myself at your disposal entirely."

"Don't spoil the child, William," said Aunt Mary, advancing. "Did you never learn that

it is quite as bad for young ladies as for children to be indulged in every thing ? ”

“ My dear Mary ! ” exclaimed Mr. Preston, hastening to meet her. “ You are very welcome. We shall feel more at home than ever, now you are with us. And you are well ? You look so.”

“ Very well, only a little tired with my long ride. But I am not disposed to have my work here undone,” she continued, laying her hand on Rose’s shoulder. “ I have been trying to teach her self-denial, and now you come home to give her every thing she wishes for.”

“ Well, why not ? ” asked Mr. Preston, laughing. “ I’ve plenty of time and money, and no other chick nor child. And Mary, what’s the use of self-denial, when it is entirely unnecessary ? Rose will show that she can practise that virtue when the proper time comes ; just now, let us enjoy what a kind Providence gives us.”

“ Yes,” replied Mrs. Morrison, “ if we are only careful not to enjoy selfishly. But I see you can talk in your old fashion yet. Why, where is Rose ? ”

"With her pets," he answered, glancing toward one of the long windows, which, as the day had been quite warm, was not yet closed. Two pretty little girls, apparently about five and seven years old, were upon the piazza, and Rose, standing at the window, was talking with them. "No, Amy, no, Nina. You must come in now. Tea will be ready directly, and I don't wish you to stay out later." She turned to join the others, and the younger child followed, but the elder one caught her by the dress. "Just one run down the avenue, Cousin Rose, and then I'll come." — "Don't ask again, Nina," she said, turning from her. — "But I *will* go," persisted the child, starting to run. — "Stop one minute, love. If you like better to take your own way than to be a good child and please your friends, you can do so ; but think about it first." Rose came into the sitting-room, leading a little fair-haired girl, who was fondling a white kitten, and just then the tea-bell rang.

"Will you come to tea, Aunt Mary ? These little people had their supper long ago." As

they were seating themselves, little Nina entered, and coming shyly to the head of the table, whispered, "I didn't go, Cousin Rose." — "I thought you would not, darling," she answered, kissing the rosy lips put up to meet hers. "Now run and play with Amy and kitty."

"Whose children are these, Rose?" asked Aunt Mary, when the little girl had left them.

"Florence Meredith's, — that is to say, they belong to her husband, Mr. Sutherland. I wrote to you that Florence was married. They are travelling now, and Mrs. Meredith and Charles with them; and as there didn't seem to be any very good place for the children to stay, I asked leave to take them."

"And what put that idea into your wise little head, I wonder?"

"Oh, I wanted something to do, for fear of growing idle; and it doesn't interfere with other duties, for they have a nurse-maid, a very nice girl, who dresses them, sees to their clothes, and all that. They are sweet little creatures; Amy is as docile as a lamb, and

Nina, though she is passionate and sometimes wayward, is very bright and loving."

"Nina has enough of our blood in her veins to be obstinate occasionally," said Mr. Preston. "Sutherland is a kind of cousin of mine; Helen Preston's son. You remember her, Mary?"

"Yes, I used to see her, but was never much acquainted. And how long do these little ones remain here, Rose?"

"Till their father and mother return. He is a Professor of Chemistry in some institution, and has been over-worked; so he will stay till he regains his strength. Mrs. Meredith and Charles are coming home very soon; they will be near neighbors; and the others will return before winter."

Soon after they returned to the sitting-room, the maid came for the children. "Oh, Cousin Rose! if you would only come up just a little while?" said Nina, pleadingly, and Amy looked, but did not speak. "Yes—go with Lucy, and I will come by the time you are undressed." They gave the good-night kiss

and ran away, and Rose soon followed them, as she had promised.

"Well, Mary?" said Mr. Preston, after she had left them.

"What do you want me to say, William? that you have a convenient house, handsomely furnished, and a very pretty, graceful daughter to preside over it?"

"Rather more than that. Thanks to the good training she has had — your care, Louisa's, and Mrs. Meredith's combined, I suppose, — my rose-bud has blossomed into as lovely a flower as one need wish to have. She is a treasure, Mary. I have not been so happy for many years, — not since her mother died. And is she not like her mother?"

"Very much; I was struck with the resemblance this afternoon. But she is like you, too, William; a good deal of Preston in her."

"Perhaps I love her more on that account. Our tastes and feelings are very much alike. Margaret was a dear, sweet girl, but my Rosalind is the apple of my eye."

"She always was," said Aunt Mary. driv

"You did your best to spoil her in her childhood, and you'll do it now if you can."

He laughed. "I'll keep you here to prevent it, Mary. Seriously, I think you will find there is not much danger; you have implanted religious principles in her heart, and she is very conscientious. Here comes my jewel. I have been telling Aunt Mary what a good daughter I have."

"Ah, she knows more about me than you do, and will believe what she pleases," said Rose, sitting down by her father. "Aunt Mary, I have made a discovery since we have lived here. I never knew I had any name but Rose, and it seems I was christened Rosalind Mary; the Mary for you, I suppose. I wonder why no one ever called me by my true name."

"Because your name was your mother's also," replied Mr. Preston. "It would not have been quite convenient to have two Rosalinds, and we thought the shorter name prettier for a little child. Then, when your mother died, it was a long time before I could bear to



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hear her name, and the habit of calling you Rose became fixed."

"Well, I like Rose best for the home name. It is more familiar. But father always calls me Rosalind when other people are here, and I like that too; it seems more dignified for the mistress of a house."

The evening passed in pleasant conversation, and when they separated for the night Rose followed Mrs. Morrison into her room. "Prayers come immediately after breakfast, as they used to do at our old home, Aunt Mary. I missed that very much at Aunt Louisa's, but Florence and I used to have a little service of our own before we went to school. And then, at Mrs. Meredith's it was all right; for there it is never omitted. It does seem so pleasant to have you with us again," she added, fondly, kneeling down by her side.

"And you are very happy, my child?" asked Aunt Mary, laying her hand on the young girl's head.

"*Very* happy; happier than in all my life

before. My father and I love each other dearly, and every thing is pleasant around us. But he says there is no danger of our being too happy, if we remember to let others share in our sunshine. He has found two college friends of his near here: one a physician, the other a missionary to the poor, very pleasant gentlemen both of them; and he tells them to call on us freely when they find those who need help. Sometimes I go with them to see the poor or sick people. It is such a comfort to be able to help them; our flowers and fruit have carried pleasure to a good many homes this summer. But, Aunt Mary, I feel often as if I could not bear trial as some of these people do. I wonder if I should be patient and submissive. There is a blind woman not far off, whom I visit sometimes; she likes to have me read to her. And a young lame girl who can only get about on crutches; the effect of burns. I hope such things will not happen to me; but if they do, perhaps God will help me to be patient."

"I trust you will never be tried in such ways, Rose ; but we may be very sure that he permits no affliction to come except in love. You will have trials enough if you live as long as most of us do ; and the best preparation for them is the faithful performance of daily duty, and a child-like trust in him without whom not a sparrow falleth to the ground."

Rose lifted up her bright young face. "I believe I have learned that, Aunt Mary ; to love God as my Father. It is not a hard lesson to learn, with such an earthly father as I have. And I am trying to teach my little Nina, while she is so young, what it took me so long to learn, — that we are happiest when we try to make others happy. Father says I am patient with the children ; but how can I be otherwise, remembering how Margaret, dear Margaret, always bore with me ? Good-night, dear Aunt Mary."

Mrs. Morrison was a close observer ; and as the days went by, and she noticed Rose's affectionate thoughtfulness for those around her,

her watchful care of the two little ones, her loving, patient gentleness with their faults, her readiness to aid the suffering or the needy, and her willing sacrifice of her own wishes and plans to the comfort or pleasure of others, she rejoiced to see that the good seed sown long ago was now bearing abundant fruit. Rose had lost nothing of the merry, child-like frankness of her disposition ; some would have said she was still too much of a child ; but neither her father nor Aunt Mary were inclined to find fault with the bright, joyous temper that seemed to shed sunshine all over the house, even if it broke out occasionally into childish frolic. Her father would willingly have lavished upon her every thing that his wealth could procure ; but her tastes were simple, and the money given her for dress or ornament often found its way to the purse of Mr. Ashley, the missionary.

One day she came to the library, where Mrs. Morrison was sitting, with a grave look upon her face. "What now, Rose?" asked her friend. "Has Dr. Barnard been here with a

tale of sickness? or Mr. Ashley with a case of distress, like the Italians he sent for you to interpret for, the other day? He tells me he considers you as almost a colleague in his good work."

"It is not much I can do, Aunt Mary; and I should be ungrateful indeed not to wish to make some little return for the happiness God has so freely bestowed on me. But just now I was not thinking of the troubles of others, but of a more selfish one: a tiny cloud in my clear sky, that is all. I have been trying to make myself enter cordially and willingly into an arrangement that father thinks best; but I do not like it, that is the truth," and she laughed merrily.

"But what is this cloud, my child?"

"Oh, it is not a new thing; father has been talking for quite a long time about it. He says I need a lady of experience in the house, as a constant companion, to give me advice and assistance; that I am too young and unpractised to take the entire charge of an establishment like this; that he used to feel that

Margaret had too much care and responsibility, though circumstances did not then permit him to do as he wished ; and that if he can find some lady of pleasant manners and kind disposition, who would be an agreeable member of the family, and supply my want of experience, it would be best for us all. Besides, he says that he or I might be ill, and then we should be obliged to have some one here, and it would be better to have a person accustomed to our ways. It is all very true and very reasonable, I know; but when I think of having a stranger here, to interrupt our pleasant evening chats, and be always among us, I cannot like the idea. Perhaps," she added, glancing with an arch smile at Aunt Mary, "it is because I like being mistress, and am afraid I shall not have so much of my own way. In that case, I suppose it would be the best thing for me."

Aunt Mary had listened with a quiet smile. "Undoubtedly," she said. "But are you sure that the new member of your family would

interfere with your happiness? and does your father know your reluctance?"

"Oh, Aunt Mary! I would not let him know for all the world. It is quite as much out of regard for my comfort as his own that he proposes it; and if it were ten times as disagreeable, I would not say one word to prevent any thing he really wished. But if the lady is ever so pleasant, there must be a certain formality and awkwardness, for a time at least; and suppose she should be as dignified as Mrs. Meredith, of whom I am always a little afraid, though I love her so well; or suppose she should be possessed of an inquiring mind, and wish to know every thing that is going on? We have been so happy together, I dread any alteration. And of course we must make the lady happy and comfortable here, you know; for she may not fancy strangers any more than I do. I'll tell you, Aunt Mary!" and she threw back her bright curls with a quick motion habitual to her, "I'll be so charming that she can't help loving me, and that will make it all right."

Aunt Mary seemed somewhat inclined to laugh, and some one else said, "Who is it that is to be charmed by my treasure?"

Rose sprang up, and went to her father. "Only 'the lady of experience,' you remember," she said, laying her head on his shoulder, "and you'll try to find a pleasant one, I am sure."

"I have found her, my Rose of Sharon; and I am sure you will be satisfied. Allow me to introduce to you 'the lady of experience,' in the person of Mrs. Mary Morrison."

Rose looked from one to the other in mute astonishment. "Is it true?" she asked, at length. "Do you really mean it?"

"Yes, my daughter. She has kindly consented to make this her permanent home; and I shall find in her, as I always have, the kindness of a sister, and you the tenderness of a mother. Are you content?"

She looked up gratefully in her father's face, and then turned to her other friend. "I can never thank you, Aunt Mary; but I will do my best to make you happy. To think that

I troubled myself for nothing, and that my cloud was only one of those white, fleecy ones that make the sky the lovelier !”

“Tears, Rosalind ?” said Mr. Preston smiling.

“Only happy ones, dear father. My cup of joy was full before ; now it is overflowing. I should like, if I could, to make some offering of thanks.” And bending down, she kissed Aunt Mary’s cheek, and hurried to her own room.

Aunt Mary herself wiped away a tear. She was thinking of the time, more than ten years before, when she first talked with the indulged, self-willed child about her faults ; and the change that these years had wrought. “She is a good child, William,” she said, as she raised her eyes and met Mr. Preston’s look of pleasure. “A very good child. I hope many years of comfort are in store for us all.”

“I hope so, too,” he answered ; “but whatever may chance, we have learned to say ‘God’s will be done.’ You and I, Mary,

learned that lesson through much trial and sorrow; I hope my child has learned it through love and gratitude. And if her mother and sister, who so dearly loved her while here, can see her life, their hearts must rejoice to know how true a disciple she has become of the Master they loved and served."

THE END.



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